TOWARDS ADDRESSING INEQUALITY AND IRRESPONSIBILITY IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA; A LESSON FROM SOVIET RUSSIA'S EDUCATION POLICY

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Abstract

Education is the bedrock of development economically, politically, socially and culturally. It is an eye opener via which skills are developed, guarded and utilised to better the advancement of the human socio-cultural settings. Over the years, there has been global yearning towards child education right. Although, this has been greatly addressed in the advanced polities, developing economies have faced setbacks in relation to education policy; its formation and implementation. This paper interrogates Soviet Russia's education policy; showcasing leadership relevance as actor and implication on education policy direction among developing African countries, especially Nigeria. Constructivism was adopted as the framework while the interpretive design was used. Data were sourced through primary and secondary sources. Archival materials, journal articles, books and internet materials were used. Data were subjected to content analysis. The study unraveled the significance of education policy in the Soviet Russia. Vladimir Lenin, the forerunner of the Bolshevik Revolution, saw the need for literacy amidst the vast populace of the newly formed Russia under the umbrella of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). To enhance overall impactful governance, policies were tailored towards making every Soviet citizen literate. Nigeria over time has embarked on various education policies. Importantly, efforts have been espoused towards making education a free possession of citizenry, particularly, every Nigerian child. As the Soviet Russia served a template for promotion of literacy amidst the divergent cultural heritages, a multicultural setting like Nigeria stands a good chance of addressing illiteracy, lending credence to the Soviet Russia education policy.

Keywords: Education Policy; Soviet Russia; Language in Education; Nigeria; literacy

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1. Introduction

Addressing inequality and irresponsibility in indigenous education in Nigeria is a very interesting and important aspect which requires concerted endeavour. Nigeria is a nation rich in cultural diversity, with a significant portion of its population belonging to various indigenous groups. These communities possess unique knowledge systems, languages, and traditions that have been passed down for generations. However, the education system in Nigeria often overlooks the specific needs and cultural contexts of indigenous learners. This situation has over the years, resulted in a pervasive issue: inequality and irresponsibility in indigenous education. This inequality manifests in several ways. Firstly, there's a lack of access to quality education in many indigenous communities. Schools might be geographically distant, infrastructure might be inadequate, and qualified teachers who understand the local language and culture might be scarce. Secondly, the current curriculum often fails to integrate indigenous knowledge and perspectives. This disregards the valuable contributions these communities can make and creates disconnection between education and the lived experiences of indigenous students. The consequences of this educational irresponsibility are far-reaching. Indigenous students are more likely to drop out of school due to a lack of relevance and cultural insensitivity. This limits their opportunities for social mobility and economic empowerment. Additionally, the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems weakens the cultural fabric of these communities and hinders their ability to adapt to challenges like climate change.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach. Firstly, there's a need for increased investment in education infrastructure within indigenous communities. This includes building schools, providing adequate learning materials, and training qualified teachers who can navigate the complexities of intercultural education. Secondly, the curriculum must be reformed to integrate indigenous knowledge and perspectives. This could involve incorporating traditional ecological knowledge, languages, and storytelling into the learning process. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between indigenous communities, educational institutions, and policymakers is crucial. Indigenous leaders should have a say in shaping the education system to better serve their communities. By working together, these stakeholders can create culturally responsive learning environments that empower indigenous students and ensure the preservation of their valuable knowledge systems. Significantly, tackling inequality and irresponsibility in indigenous education in Nigeria is not just an educational issue, rather, it has importantly become a matter of social justice and cultural

sustainability. By acknowledging the unique needs of indigenous learners, integrating their knowledge into the curriculum, and fostering collaboration, an education system that celebrates diversity, fosters opportunity, and strengthens the cultural tapestry of Nigeria becomes a necessity. Indigenous education in Nigeria faces a critical challenge: persistent inequality and a lack of focus on the specific needs and cultural contexts of these communities (Akpan & Etim, 2018). This marginalization does not only hinder the educational advancement of indigenous Nigerians but also threatens the preservation of their unique cultural heritage. To address this issue, a multi-pronged approach is necessary, focusing on curriculum reform, improved infrastructure, and community empowerment. One key aspect of tackling inequality is reforming the national curriculum to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and languages (Mkpanam & Owan, 2017). This would not only make education more relevant and engaging for indigenous students but also foster a sense of cultural pride and identity. Research by Afolabi (2016) suggests that integrating indigenous knowledge into STEM fields can lead to more innovative solutions to local problems.

Furthermore, the physical infrastructure of schools in indigenous communities often falls short of acceptable standards. Dilapidated buildings, inadequate teaching materials, and a lack of basic amenities like sanitation facilities create a learning environment that discourages students and hinders their academic progress (Obi, 2019). Increased government funding and targeted initiatives are crucial to improve school infrastructure and provide conducive learning environment for indigenous children. Beyond infrastructure, a sense of ownership and responsibility within indigenous communities is vital for a sustainable educational system. Empowering communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding their schools, such as curriculum development and teacher recruitment, can foster a sense of responsibility and encourage community involvement (Egunyomi & Onwuka, 2017). Teacher training also plays a vital role.

Equipping teachers with the cultural sensitivity and pedagogical skills required to cater to the diverse needs of indigenous learners is paramount. This could involve workshops on incorporating indigenous knowledge systems and fostering a culturally inclusive classroom environment (Nwala, 2018). Technology can also be a powerful tool for bridging the educational gap. Investing in digital infrastructure and providing access to educational technology resources can open up new avenues for learning and connect indigenous students with the broader world (Ezenwoye, 2020). However, ensuring equitable access to technology requires addressing the digital divide that often exists between rural and urban areas. Partnerships between

government agencies, NGOs, and indigenous communities are crucial for addressing these issues. Collaborative efforts can leverage resources, expertise, and local knowledge to develop a more holistic approach to indigenous education (Okafor, 2015). Addressing the issue of inequality and irresponsibility in indigenous education requires a long-term commitment. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of implemented programs with clear performance indicators are essential to track progress and adapt strategies as needed (Hussain, 2018). Ultimately, the goal is to create an educational system which of course, is both equitable and empowering for indigenous Nigerians. By fostering cultural pride, providing quality education, and empowering communities, Nigeria can ensure that all its citizens within the indigenous education system, regardless of background, have the opportunity to qualitative education and, subsequently, succeed in promoting equality and responsiveness in her educational system.

2. An Overview of the Soviet Russia's Education Policy

Extant studies of Russia's presences in Africa (Abimbola et al, 2024) show the significance in developing countries of Africa, especially Nigeria, in taking formative approach from the Russian system in addressing domestic issues. The Soviet Union's education policy was a complex and prototype system designed to achieve multiple goals. Of course, the forerunner of the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, Vladimir Lenin, envisioned a society where the voices of the masses would be heard. Thus, education became a major concern the policies of the early years of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The significance of this is specifically portrayed in mass the literacy campaign of V. I. Lenin, the early Soviet leader. Primarily, there are key factors to be cognizant of in the Soviet education policy. These key aspects are typically viewed in relation to centralization and secularization. Upon the collapse of both the tsarist regime and the provisional government, following the 1917 revolution, the communist government abolished the Tsarist education system. A well-constructed version, which was viewed to serve the society better, as opposed to the aristocratic disposition of the former, was established as a fully centralized and secular education system. Religious instruction was removed, and all schools came under state control. Significantly, the main focus was devising consolidated efforts towards the eradication of mass illiteracy among the populace (Omotade and Oluwafemi, 2018). Mass illiteracy among the Soviet citizens was a significant problem which threatened the newly formed Soviet government pre-revolutionary Russia. The government launched mass literacy campaigns, achieving remarkable success in

raising literacy rates across the vast nation. Equality of Access: Education was a guaranteed right for all citizens, with free tuition and co-educational schools from 1918, though this was briefly changed during World War II. This policy aimed to create a more egalitarian society by providing educational opportunities regardless of social background. Marxist-Leninist Indoctrination: A core element was the indoctrination of students in Marxist-Leninist ideology. History, social sciences, and other subjects were taught through this ideological lens, promoting communist values and loyalty to the state. Early Shifts in Approach: Initially, Soviet education was influenced by progressive education ideas, with an emphasis on practical work alongside academic learning. However, this approach was gradually abandoned in favor of a more standardized and centrally controlled curriculum.

Standardization and Rigidity: By the 1930s, the system became increasingly rigid with a standardized curriculum for all students. This approach ensured basic education for all but limited opportunities for individual talents and critical thinking. Science and Technology Focus: The education system prioritized science and technology education, aiming to develop a skilled workforce for the country's rapid industrialization. This focus yielded a highly qualified population in these fields. For example, there was "Shifting Vocational Education." This implies that vocational training was initially integrated into general education but later separated into specialized vocational schools. This aimed to better prepare students for specific jobs but potentially limited their future options. Not only that, there was efforts towards Perestroika and other reforms. Significantly, in the late 1980s, under Gorbachev's Perestroika reforms, attempts were made to introduce more flexibility and reduce ideological control in education. However, these reforms were not fully implemented before the Soviet Union's collapse. There was a re-orientation towards legacy. It was established that the Soviet education system had a significant impact, achieving high literacy rates and creating a large, well-educated workforce. However, its emphasis on ideology and rigid structure limited academic freedom and critical thinking. Thus, the Soviet education policy was a product of its time, reflecting the communist ideology and the state's goals for social transformation and industrial development. While it achieved successes, its limitations and emphasis on control ultimately left a complex legacy.

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3. Soviet Education System; Language Factor and Identity Revisited

The history of Russia over the years has revealed the significance and role of language in shaping peoples' identity (Abimbola et al, 2024). From the beginning of the Soviet Union through its dissolution, Soviet leaders have attempted to achieve the adoption of the lingua franca, which could improve relations amidst different republics with each republic's ability to retain its own ethnic and cultural identity. The Soviet System and its successor, the Russian Federation, provide a detailed insight into language-identity interaction. Like several other countries, under a single, shared flag, they have struggled to incorporate a multi-ethnic state. None has given an entire solution to the crisis, maybe because there is none, either in the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation. However, the Soviet government, at least partly, may have been on the right course. They sought, under the guise of an idea not focused on racial derivation, to unite all the different peoples. Their philosophy was chosen to unify Marxism/Communism.

The Soviet Union has been a multilingual and multi-ethnic state throughout its existence. The Soviet census of 1989 recorded more than 100 ethnic groups each speaking their own language and celebrating their own culture and heritage to a considerable extent. Extant studies currently claim that at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, there were about 200 languages which could have posed a serious threat to the education system of the USSR. However, Lenin was not in anyway, bothered about the variety of ethnic groups and languages which the Soviet education system faced, because he saw Marxism as the common force for the emerging Communist movement. As Marx advocated, Lenin maintained that Communism is generally transcending national and ethnical identities and finally bringing all people together as a world proletariat. The only way to support proletarian struggle was through nationalism. This was highly upheld by Lenin (Grenoble 2003).

Thus, the Soviet education policy was carefully devised to cater for the divergent indigenous populace of the Soviet Union. Lenin carefully ensured that all Soviet languages earned equal status. In other to effectively implement language in education policy, Lenin argued that there should be no single language as a state language. This thus, advocated instead, national equality and self-determinism. Lenin stated that each of the Soviet languages was inalienable. The Soviet Constitution of 1936, even after his death, consisted of this notion. The Constitution reserved the right to use their ethnic languages for all Soviet citizens. Teaching was also upheld in the native and indigenous languages of the people in their respective indigenous domain. However, Lenin as well as the other Russian revolutionaries still faced a huge two-pronged challenge to their advancement towards the Marxist

socialist paradise, of which they believed so deeply. The Soviet Union was widely multicultural and many people were poorly educated and illiterate. The population had to be learned in preparation to inculcate the masses into the Communist ideology. Extant scholarly debates have established this. For example, Comrie (1981, p. 22) avers that:

among the principal practical difficulties faced by the new system was its need to unify the nation, so that all its citizens felt that it was part of and benefited from the new growth. Of course, one necessity is that there is a shared language for facilitating communication between members of different ethnic groups, especially with regard to the intense centralization of the Soviet state, and the obvious option for the language was the Russian [as it was the mother tongue of the largest group of Soviet citizens].

Nonetheless, amidst Lenin's clear commitment to language fairness, the leadership of the Communist Party desired a lingua franca to achieve its objective. The Russian speaking majority, whose impact on policy formation and the distribution of resources was massive, encouraged the growth of native languages in the Republics, but there was the need to acquired enormous amounts of Russian lexical elements and grammatical structures and also Russian spellings. Nonetheless, it should be recalled that, during Lenin, many of the Central Asian languages, primarily used among Islamic peoples, were transformed to Latin orthography from its traditional Arabic scripts. Latin spelling was chosen to prevent the party's presence of the changes in a linguistic, cultural and religious Russification policy (Comrie, 1981). In Russia, an idea was also attempted to transform Russian to a Latin alphabet, but that was never successful. The tenures of the Latin alphabets were brief but after Lenin's death, several languages were compelled in a few years to turn to Cyrillic spelling. It was justified for those who did not speak Russian as a first language to learn Russian.

With the coming of Stalin to power, Stalin began pushing ideas and implementing policies that moved the focus of languages of equal status away from each other toward an idea that the common language that Stalin thought was the international Lingua Franca for economic, policy and cultural cooperation, would take shape when the workers ruled the world. This concept fits in well with his Marxist's description of a nation as a specifically stable group of people with a common territory, a language, economic life and psychological composition (Grenoble, 2003). It is especially important in Stalin's opinion that the nation is an institution with a shared language and a joint philosophy, like what was being showcased by the

Soviet world. Also, the determinations of which languages that should have the right to the legal rights and privileges, and be deemed equal to Russian were to be decided by the Soviet leadership. In addition, it provided the basis for the inclusion or exclusion of groups in allocating language-related state services. After Stalin became the head of the party in 1923, the Soviet government started to educate the indigenous population in its mother tongue even before Lenin's death and to place them on track with the so-called *korennizatsiya*, also known as nativization, or indigenisation. This policy recognised the national languages as equivalent to Russian, while at the same time establishing a wider, better trained working group to industrialise the country quickly (Grenoble, 2003,p. 44).

However, there were many issues with the implementation. Many of the outskirts were illiterate and poorly trained to start, so they had to be taught to read before they could learn other things. Moreover, several lessons in Russian, which many of the students did not understand, were necessary for a lack of qualified facilitators who communicated in national languages, and for the absence of sufficient teaching materials written in their mother languages. By the end of the 1920s, *Korennizatsiia* in favour of Russification was dropped, but not formally. Grenoble (2003, pp. 44-45) substantiates that:

The policies of Soviet nationality have been modified, with Russian culture and language being the best means for the soviet society being officially promoted. The policy of nativisation was no longer seen as an absolute goal in itself and was greatly reduced and then fully abolished.

This change was particularly apparent when Stalin addressed the 17th Party Congress in 1934 and represented a sharp break from Lenin in the party's perception of Russian chauvinism as the greatest health danger to the Soviet Union. Rather Stalin believed that uncontested nationalism was the greatest threat. In particular, self-determination that was counterproductive to the greater objective of a united communist Russia was mostly attacked. Stalin's principle "national in form, socialist in content" came on this basis. That is, the national languages still possessed legitimacy, at least in principle but Stalin had to take a view of the direction in which the Soviet Union was to advance in the Republics in which they were used. Interestingly, however, the leaders of the Soviet Union agreed during the Second World War to avoid Russian and allow other languages to be adopted, partially because they had no means to implement Russian but because they did not wish to reawaken resistance in the nations (Landua and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001).

While Stalin wished to make Russian the lingua franca, at a time when unity was absolutely important, he realised that his ambitions to flush out the country's languages would cause significant damage to the Soviet Union. Stalin did not return to its heavy Russian drive until after Second World War and it progressed till his demise in 1953. After Stalin's death, Khrushchev was able to prohibit many of Stalin's disastrous policies, and separated the Party from activities that were atrocious by many under Stalin's rule. The gap made reforms as easier in the field of language policy, particularly, in the Soviet education system, in the Soviet Union as elsewhere. As Lenin and Stalin acknowledged that ethnic heterogeneity is a potential source of high volatility, Khrushchev and his advisors understood, however, that language as a proxy for ethnicity was a way out of this issue (Laitin, 2000). Moreover, Khrushchev and the Soviet authorities recognised that languages can also be exploited, promoted and shaped for the good of the state as a major factor in creating a political culture of the ethnic group and as a tool for establishing the state (Safran, 1992).

With the Soviet system studied closely, the Soviet education system was a direction of political modernism similar to many societies. When masses were educated, they wanted social mobility and the right to engage in the political arena, which meant that it was "desirable that languages that the masses spoke be in keeping with the dominant elites." Getting the mass languages in line with the languages of the elites was a huge challenge for the Soviet language planners because of the number of languages. As Safran (1992: 398) argues regarding the stand of the Party leadership, the option of language and the matter of preserving or discouraging minority languages rose beyond mere political integration and concerned about the validity of the national culture on which language policy rested.

While all national languages in the Soviet past had kept national equality at least to Russian until now, Khrushchev, nevertheless, made a policy change in which Russian became the official language. There has also been no systematic movement for a Soviet culture with an explicitly Soviet language until that period of Soviet existence, although many of the previous language policies sought to get non-Russian Soviet people closer to the Russian ideal, even if official statements had not. Towards Communist utopia, Khrushchev had a vision. He was dreaming of a Soviet Union which was economically and linguistically united. He wanted to develop a Soviet society in which all other cultures would subsume. In short, Khrushchev made Russian the second language of all non-Russian speaking Republics in order to achieve his goal. This was appreciated by the Party because certain languages were considered less viable than others and required less support and security.

Moreover, in the opinion of the Party, Russian drive would help consolidate its influence over the peripheral Republics, and enable Soviet people to integrate deeper into Russian Soviet culture. The ideas of Khrushchev had been enshrined in the constitution with the 1958-1959 Education Reforms that declared that mother tongue instruction was no longer mandatory and Russian was a requisite course of study where mother-tongue education had not been abolished. The practical effect of this was that teaching in the national languages was facilitated by intensified Russian education. Russian has held the de facto post of the USSR official language more than ever before, and has held a central role in education and government, without being called as such. According to Grenoble (2003, pp. 57-58), the reforms initiated by Khrushchev embodied overt attempt at Russification of the Russia state. Khrushchev, whose distance had begun with Stalin's Russo-centric policies, finally entered Stalin's Russification policies.

Both his predecessors and the scholars of that period influenced Brezhnev's linguistic concerns strongly. Soviet sociologists and socio-linguists have argued and claimed that some ethnographic studies show that among those non-Russians who studied Russian at a young age, the most desirable type of acculturation is found (Szporluk, 1992). The Russian language, according to Brezhnev, will develop the unity of the Soviet society. Not only that, it will also act as an important speed-up in drawing nations together (Radishov, 1992). Party rhetoric went much more inclusive of the Soviet ethnic community than Khrushchev's idea of the Soviet society. Indeed, the establishment of Soviet citizens as symbol of the growth and fusion of different nationalities into a supra-nationality is one of the explicit goals formulated in the Brezhnev period (Grenoble, 2003). In other words, Brezhnev and the Party's fellow-leaders desired a whole fresh ethnicity to integrate Soviet populations in a way that Marxism and Communism were previously unable to. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see Brezhnev's objectives as modern or creative. This is substantiated by Kreindler (1982, pp. 16-17) thus:

There are few original elements in the Brezhnev theory of soviet nationality, which basically are an alliance of the ideologies of Chrushev and Stalin. However, this mixture created a new theoretical, much stronger fabric in support of the Russian superior position. At the same time, technically cowed non-Russian languages were totally based on essentially redundant Leninist theories.

The Soviet language policy was established under Brezhnev and in fact reached an entirely different stage from Lenin's thought. The Brezhnev policy, however, also supported Russia, which had long held that language is ethnic and by extension portrayal of identity. If all populations in the Soviet Union could therefore be

integrated in the same language, all of them would become a single ethnicity, united and freshly established. For this reason, Brezhnev was continuing to substitute Russian language teaching in non-Russian schools and increasing the number of institutions for which Russian was the only language of communication appropriately. In his view, the party was so far apart from Lenin's original anti-Russian ethnocentrism that now, as opposed to Lenin's proposal that Russians would be bilingual if living in a non-Russian area, the local populations should be bilingual, in order to incorporate with Russian Soviet infrastructure (Kreindler, 1982).

The most important blow to the status of national languages among the Republics, however, was the Soviet Constitution in 1977 which, by replacing right with opportunity, revoked the right of the mother tongue and obtained education in one's mother tongue. Thus, only the right of access (even if the right is only speculative) to protect one's native language was allowed by the 1977 constitution. That was accompanied by the Proclamation of 1978 on measures for the further enhancement of Russian language study and teaching in Republics of the USSR which mandated concrete and comprehensive measures to improve the teaching of Russian languages (Grenoble, 2003). The decree from 1978 was so overriding that it also developed Russian pre-school education with a view to increasing its proliferation (Landua and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001).

Despite these major shifts in Soviet politicking and policy, the alleged Russianisation of the Soviet Republics was resisted. This was particularly evident in the Trans-Caucasus region as seen in the 1976 draft Constitution of the Georgian Socialist Republic by the fight against the designation of Georgian as the State Language. In 1978 a language revolt took place outside the Government House in Tbilisi which lasted about five hours and involved up to 50,000 agitators, but the original draft did not mention Georgian as a state language. This has also come in line with a Moscow policy to refrain from publishing theses for advanced degrees in any language other than Russian at Tbilisi University. The demonstration brought back the reference to the 'national language' of the indigenous language as Georgia's, Armenia's and Azerbaijan's state constitutions (Bilinsky, 1982).

From the Brezhnev period until 1989, Soviet language policies continued somewhat unchanged. In reality, the leadership of the party showed that the Union Republics had begun to preserve their language independence from Moscow. They paid little attention to this. By 1989 Moldova had reversed its spelling to the language of Latin and all Union Republics other than the RSFSR, passed laws granting state language

status to [their] titular tongues. In April 1990, these acts eventually provoked a response when the central Soviet government responded with the adoption of 'The Law of the People's Languages of the USSR' which declared Russian as a state language for the first time. This was not a straightforward, oriented language policy in the Soviet Government's view of individual Republics as a separatist-nationalist trend (Grenoble, 2003), but rather a reaction. While Grenoble's affirmation seems to characterise the most reasonable grounds for Russian as a state language, it lacks a big essential point, which shows a wider historic tendency, even in Soviet times, for the decision to adopt such a rule, to turn to the Russianism of a specific problem to come up with its answer. Thus, the Soviet regime has become the core linguistic and identity problematic states.

4. Indigenous Education in the Soviet Russia; a Critique of Language Policy and Planning Perspective

Extant studies have unraveled that the language policy and planning pursued by the state, especially a multi-ethnic state like the USSR, must be adequate and proportionate to the sociolinguistic situation prevailing in such a society. Of course, the argument in relation to language policy involving indigenous education is usually confronted with difficult decisions in language planning, which must be made considering the historical past, long-term linguistic contacts, observance of linguistic speakers of languages, state needs and much more. Soviet Union's language policy is very significant even, in the consideration of the sociolinguistic situation at the beginning of the Russian Federation, being a consequence of the language policy in the post-Soviet era (Гронская, 2013, pp. 56-57).

A lot of scholarly contributions are notable in Russia's language policy planning debate. While clarifying language policy, notable scholarly debates have postulated that such endeavour could be done by specifying the totality of the varying values and realistic steps to resolve language issues in communities and the entire state. The language policy can have two key derivatives in conjunction with its objectives. These consist: (1) Perspective; that is, language preparation or other language building, and (2) Retrospective; which is concerned with language and speech culture (Razumovskaya and Sokolovsky, 2012, p. 927). Language policy refers to the attempt, strategies or values adapted to language(s) in language environments. Many researchers have viewed the conception as a field of urgent emphasis in order to broaden the coast of socio-linguistics, being an intellectual pursuit which contains activities that have to do with the usage of language and language attitudes in

societies, particularly for academic elucidation (Bowring and Borgoyakova, 2016). In consequence, it has generated plenty of literature in the field (Omotade and Oluwafemi, 2018).

The efforts in the field of language use and attitudes are important for language activities within society, for example communication, legislation of standards and practices for the use of languages. In his book titled: *The History and Theory of Language Planning,* the scholar, Nekvapil (2011) claims that two definitions are possible in relation to language planning within the societal context. These are linguistic and meta-linguistic practices. According to him, on the one hand there are speeches, while the language and utterance are not taken into consideration, and on the other hand people will concentrate their attention on language or utterances, analyse them, consider altering them and often act on them (Nekvapil, 2011, p. 871). Language planning can be clearly illustrated with the above definition in the second form of operation, because changes in language or linguistic practices must be required during the course of language planning. The principle of language preparation corresponds with linguistic policy. It can be considered as Language Planning and Policy (LPP) (Baldauf, 2005).

Scholars, such as Cooper (1989), have supported language planning concepts. Language planning can be regarded as a body of ideas and regulations, changed rules, convictions and practices aimed at changing the language use in a given community or several communities (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997, p. 3). The Russian group, in particular Soviet Russia, exemplifies a socio-linguistic context in which there are many languages. From the beginning of Soviet Russia, the availability of many ethnic nationalities led to multiple languages. The establishment of the Soviet Union has indicated, according to Nekvapil (2011), that over 100 ethnic groups at varying levels of development have been unified in one major state. In a limited time, they understood and embraced their different languages. The languages of some of these ethnic minorities were spoken only, while at the same time, only a few among them had their own standardization. Nevertheless, all the languages had different levels of growth. What this means is that drastic changes were not seen until the end of the 1930s in the early Soviet era.

During this time, as Nekvapil has argued (2011), the Soviet doctrine of Leninism claimed that ethnic groups, including education on the basis of their languages, have a right of self-determination. The advocacy for Russian spread, including the Cyrillic alphabet, was linked to the former authoritarian system of the Russian Czar and it declined in the early Soviet era as the nucleus of language planning. Thus, the basic

feature of linguistic preparation, called language planning, was the establishment, above all in the field of vocabulary development, and in the creation of textbooks, primers and the like, of alphabets, spelling systems, modernizing most of languages (Nekvapil, 2011).

In Soviet Union language planning, the main factor to be considered was that it involved leading Soviet linguists, specialists and languages experts. However, it is important to note that linguists have focused the Soviet language planning system on Marxism, which has led them to emphasize social dimensions of language, and to criticise structuralist language in order to underestimate the importance of a deliberate intervention into linguistic issues (Alpatov, 2000; Nekvapil, 2011). Significant to the wealth of literature on language planning especially in Africa, where Nigeria is situated as a multi-ethnic society, is the work of Bamgbose (1991) titled: *Language and the Nation. The language questions in Sub-Saharan Africa,* published by Edinburgh University Press. The work underlines the relevance of language planning in Africa and points out that language policy production in Africa has been afflicted throughout history by numerous problems including evasion, ambiguous, subjective, fluctuation and non-implementation of declarations.

Language Planning is defined by Bamgbose (1991, p. 109) as the coordinated pursuit of language problems solutions. Language policy, language history and language politics are all linked to this. The application of language policy by language culture should usually be observed. According to Bamgbose (1991, p. 110), without adopting policies, progress is not meaningful though implementation is difficult to achieve without policy decisions. Bamgbose (1991, p. 133) also suggested that the strength of a country's language policy is correlated to the existence of its enforcing machinery. Bamgbose (1991, p. 117) added that the Nigerian constitution's wording, in which Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are permitted "where appropriate arrangements have thus been made" in the national assembly, is an escape route for interacting as always in English in legislative deliberations.

Nekvapil and Sherman (2015) in their work: *An Introduction: Language Management Theory in Language Policy and Planning*, deal in language policy and planning analysis with the descriptions "top-down," "bottom-up," and related principles. In addition to the debate they outlined the role of Language Management Theory in language policy and language planning in different analytical frameworks and characterized language regulation. Taking from the view of Nekvapil and Sherman (2015, p. 1), language policy and planning (LPP) is frequently used in the form of research practices in which different aspects of language activity are examined. The fact that this form of behaviour is directed towards improvement in the structure and usage

of language or languages may be constrained but not solely. Modification in the configuration and use of language as it pertains to linguistic policies and planning can be facilitated by actors in order to provide solutions to language issues, in particular multilingual language issues, in the human society. The following are identified: politicians, government officials or professionals assigned as major actors for the start of change in language structure and use in order to overcome language problems. Even ordinary speakers cannot fully discern the change action. The behaviour of common speakers is very much about the status of the language (s). Nekvapil & Sherman (2015) argue in this regard that it is also understandable, and not uncommon, to make contributions to the changes in language (s) and their use even in ordinary speakers during regular interactions. Those improvements later attracted the attention of the academics and the common use of the metaphorical pair top-down and bottom-up in LPP debate. The normal speakers are portrayed as fundamental in language policy and language planning matters. Thus, whatever policy is taken with regard to the use of language in human society, the importance of popular speakers in language politics and planning decisions in human society can thus be reflected in people in such society. The definitions of top-down, and bottom-up apply mostly to the course of the proposed transition, in particular its beginning and stopping points, and also to the orchestrators or the agents of the transition.

The top-down approach is thus tended to be related to players with substantial power whereas the bottom-up approach is compared to characters without this amount of influence. In the area of government action plan, the top-down plan can be seen, whereas bottom-up includes people. Also, the relation between the terms top-down and bottom-up and macro and micro, another metaphorical pair of LPPs, is debated (Nekvapil and Sherman, 2015). For this reason, the metaphors macro and micro mostly apply to a different level of social process sophistication. The top-down then becomes more dynamic and bureaucratic, precisely because the institutional strength of its position proves to be macro. But the bottom up is more basic, normally individual in the other direction, since it often includes people's work and is therefore interpreted like micro (Nekvapil and Sherman, 2015: 2). In brief, the philosophical and terminological small framework so far mentioned helps Language Policy and Planning Scholars (LPP) to speak of macro-planning, top-down planning and micro-planning, bottom-up. Both preparation styles have traditional participants of various levels of control. Hence, in Russia, top-down involves leaders' efforts while bottom-up involves the masses revolutionary moves to effect changes in the society.

Provision of concise and thorough explanation of language policy issues in a multicultural State and official language issues in a multi-ethnic state are scholarly debated (Omotade, 2009, pp. 158-160). It has been debated that, while the importance of language is essential for society and linguistic policy, language cannot be denied as a tool for national identity construction; it is nevertheless seen to be the strongest social apparatus for bringing people together as ethnic groups. Language is also considered as a key element of national identity formation. It is the most important tool in expressing collective thoughts and identifying the psycho-spirituality of the community of persons. It is worthy to note that language stands out as the most crucial element of the ethnic and religious attitudes of individuals and an essential prerequisite for the development and existence of people. The linguistic domain mainly experiences the strain connected with national identity. Therefore, language policy is surprisingly an essential aspect of the state construction process.

The events which resulted into the creation of the Union of the Soviet Socialists Republics (USSR) during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 turned Soviet Russia into a multi-national and peradventure, a multi-ethnic state. Notably, it is worthy of note to substantiate at this juncture that the fifteen states that made Soviet Russia a multilingual society had their unique languages. Thus, even the cradle of the Soviet Union made language challenges evident. Russia's front-line leader, Vladimir Lenin, who was the founding father and leader of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, discovered that a large proportion of the Soviet populations were illiterates. This unique circumstance led to the campaign of literacy at the beginning of the founding of the Soviet Union. In the light of the victory in the Bolshevik movement, literacy campaign became first active step by revolutionaries to change the linguistic landscape of the Soviet Union and to change public opinion and has allowed for radical changes in many ways, particularly those that took place in the Bolshevik period in later years (Omotade, 2009, p. 61)

It is arguable that linguistic strategy is directly connected with the Soviet Russian literacy drive. The fact that it was a trans-national state, the classrooms taught either Russian or local, with diverse ethnic nations. Initially, the literacy training lasted for three months, which eventually ranged from six to eight months. Although there were certain professional instructors participating in literacy, the task was not sufficient to accomplish, thus more voluntary teachers were required (Omotade, 2009, p. 62). Russian politics were of great importance for language policy in Russia. The Russification policies were strongly and widely disseminated throughout the

Soviet Russian era. In Russian ethno-linguistic connections, it consequently played a vital role.

Language policy therefore becomes more complicated and challenging in a system in which numerous languages which may stand the national language standard compete. Each of these countries naturally possessed their own respective national languages before the amalgamation in the Soviet Union, where 15 independent states co-existed and unified into one tremendous Union. If one of these languages was to be chosen upon other available languages to become a lingua franca, thus relegating others languages to different tasks, the companies of such groups would surely fight the tasks of the language policy. As further argued, Federalism kept ensuring the need for a broad native intelligentsia capable of reading and speaking the mother tongue. These native speaking groups continued to flourish throughout that era. Also, despite the social pressure to converse with the lingual franca of the State, the divergent linguistic groups exhibited no evidence of leaving their respective native tongues for the Russian language. Therefore, the Kremlin's aim to turn in the direction of Russian to become the Soviet Union's official language worsened the ongoing language problem (Omotade, 2009: 67).

5. An Overview of Inequality and Irresponsibility in Indigenous Education in Nigeria

A critical overview of Nigerian indigenous education shows that some significant inequalities are evident which should be addressed and solved, if future of the country has to be secured. It is importantly established that efforts at addressing both inequality and irresponsibility within the Nigerian indigenous education system will require a lot of initiative, zeal and hard work on the part of government authorities, education stakeholders, schools and teachers (Dogra, 2011; Olibie et al, 2013). Prior to 1960, Nigeria was under British colonization. This significantly reflected in various societal fragmentations within the Nigerian societies, education inclusive. During this period, education was under the control of the British missionaries. Schools, especially primary and secondary ones were founded by the missionaries. It is pertinent to note that some of those schools still exist till today, though, under the government of Nigeria. Names such as St Teresa Primary School; St. Paul College, among others were typical of that era. Upon the attainment of independence by Nigeria from the British rule in 1960, marking the end of the British control of Nigerian education, schools ownership fell to the custody of the Nigerian government.

Extant scholarly debates have to a great extent, delved into the Nigerian Indigenous Education System (Omotade and Oluwafemi, 2018; Danladi, 2013; Egbokhare, 2003; Olibie et al, 2013). The major factor that the Nigerian system has failed to address over the years is the multi-ethnic implications on the indigenous education. As already argued earlier, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country like the USSR. Lack of proper exhibition of educational policies have to a great extent, marred substantial progress in addressing issues bothering on indigenous education in Nigeria. For an indigenous education to be successful, multilingualism in Nigeria needs to be addressed. It is significant to note that multilingualism has further contributed to inequality in Nigerian indigenous education. Today, a cursory look into Nigerian education reveals that a lot of school age children are out of school. This is mostly evident in the Northern Nigeria, leading to the Almajiri phenomenon. Significantly, inequality in Nigerian indigenous education is not far-fetched from irresponsibility within the system. What this implies is the fact that most of the individuals assigned with providing the required educational facilities and infrastructure for conducive environment for education are corrupt. Irresponsibility has over the years gone beyond the policy makers, and found its way even among the populace. The Nigerian system has been made to neglect the needed attention that should be given to the indigenous languages as done in the USSR.

When a review of the Nigerian education sector is done, it is evident that access to high-quality education is a problem that pertains to how well the education system performs in terms of standards and excellence. One of the biggest challenges and issues facing the education system has always been achieving quality at every level, that is, primary level; secondary level and tertiary level. In the primary level, a very reasonable number of school age children could not have access to education. Of course, many factors are responsible for this. For example, there is the parenting factor. Vast distributions of Nigerian parents are illiterate. Like in the early Soviet Russia, illiteracy has become an identifiable factor within the Nigerian context. Although little efforts have been made so far in the higher institutions curricula, incorporating courses such as Adult Education, so as to cater for the requisite need in addressing mass adult illiteracy in Nigeria, policy deficiency on the part of the government towards actualizing this has become problematic. Thus, most of the adults who are also parents, do not really understand the importance of education, leading to weak attention to their school age children from the parenting angle.

Similarly, societal reasoning and perceptions have constituted to both inequality and irresponsibility in the Nigerian indigenous education. For example, the northern Nigeria has to a great extent suffered this phenomenon. Being Islamic spheres of

influence, most parents are of the orientation of Islamic training for their school age children. This of course, has negative tendencies on the general education direction in these areas. Western education is holistic pedagogy that trains individuals, young and old, in the direction of general knowledge towards societal problem solving. Thus, Islamic training only brings children to learn intricacies of the Islamic Religion, within the confines of religious dictates alone. Consequent upon this, social vices such as kidnapping, via the Boko Haram insurgent sect, a body of criminal group who believes that Western education is bad, has become very notable in the northern Nigeria (Abimbola et al, 2021). The problem of high-quality education in Nigeria has to be promptly addressed if people are to continue to advance sustainably as individuals and as a group in general.

Irresponsibility in the implementation of governmental policies is a bane to systematic attainments in Nigerian indigenous education. For instance, the policy planning documents of the Nigeria upholds that education generates the man power that contributes towards the national development, growth and sustainability. Importantly, the National Development Plan for Nigeria between 1962 – 1968 substantiated that the education programme which is being operated in Nigeria is specifically fashioned to increase as rapidly and as economically as possible the high level manpower which is indispensable to accelerated development in the country. Inequalities and irresponsibility have become impending cankerworms ravaging implementation of policies in relation to sustainable educational programmes, modalities as well as curriculum, necessary for equipping every individual with enough and required competencies, prowess as well as skills in contributing positively towards the intended sustainable growth and development (LeVan, 2008; Olibie et al, 2013).

The main fact to put into consideration in relation to addressing inequality and irresponsibility in Nigerian indigenous education system is that, to obtain a quality education, one must, however, reach a higher level of excellence in the teaching-learning process, in both the teaching and non-teaching staff, in the provision of educational resources (such as equipment, instructional materials, and infrastructure development and maintenance), in the proper administration of special education, inclusive education, and education for special target groups, such as the mass illiterate adults (parents), school age children, girl child education in developing and delivery of educational initiatives, in the curriculum development and ongoing reform, in general supervision, evaluation, control, and surveillance regarding education, in examinations, and in the entirety of the education process, in all aspects of administration and management (Olibie et al, 2013).

Language in education policy has over the years, denoted linguistic inequality in Nigerian indigenous education. Very importantly, it must be noted that political endeavours, social and academic guidance from the historical point of view have reshaped the position of the English language in the country. This is quite noticeable during the period of addressing current bilingualism position and language democratisation in line with national integration. At the expense of the indigenous languages of the people, which are capable of their respective cultural expressions, English is made to play very and holistic important role in shaping Nigerian national aspirations and its development. Emphasis should be made to address the monopolistic English to bilingualism in bilingual education, keeping with indigenous language requirements to change the language of education, politics, among others which could be a mother-tongue oriented (Danladi 2013). Nigerian Pidgin English has received numerous scholarly writings within the sociolinguistic landscape of Nigeria, and this is of course gradually locating informal penetration within the education sector, particularly in the Eastern or South-eastern Nigeria; Edo State, Delta State, among others (Egbokhare, 2003; Mafeni, 1971; Elugbe and Omamor, 1991; Akande and Salami, 2010; Elugbe, 1995). Language in education policy should, like in the USSR, where autonomy and loyalty were given to many ethnic minority groups to the cultural affairs and language functioning of each ethnic groups from the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 to the early 1930, be revisited within the Nigerian education system. Each of the ethnic languages, alongside being strongly valued, allowed the Russian language policy to address numerous ethnic languages in affirmative policies. As a result of that, efforts were consolidated in order to create, cultivate and promote the communist elite of all ethnic groups. Thus, the ethnic languages became a formal, 'titular,' language of its autonomous territory (Zhemukhov and Akturk, 2015). The Soviet language policy in dealing with non-Russian nationality was one of the most significant. Recognising the crucial role played by language in national affairs, particularly in a complex, multi-nationally organised Soviet Union, the new regime has introduced several important steps to aid in developing the non-Russian languages consistent with the overall objectives of the Communist Party (Omotade, 2009). As it was adopted during the USSR era, Nigerian National Education Policy (NNEP) requires Nigerian education systems to function multi-linguistically (Olagbaju, 2014).

In a nutshell, it is very pertinent to note that there cannot be effect without cause, scholars have variously argued at different degrees, substantiating factors responsible for inequality and irresponsibility within the Nigerian indigenous education sector. Notably, poor funding, that is, lack of adequate budgetary and financial support to education by the government; priority obscurity towards

boosting education in order to attain expectations in the country; ineffective policies/implementation concerning different levels of education; Harmonization failure regarding all levels of education; resource, fund and infrastructural unavailability; lack of constant effective review of education curriculum; ineffective established institutions saddled with the responsibility in monitoring and ensuring standards, quality, responsiveness and transparency across boards; governmental and individual corrupt practices in the education system, leading to unspeakable disaster towards the attainment of educational sustainability.

6. Soviet Russia and Nigeria's Education System; a Comparative Approach

Within the context of comparative examination of bilingual and multilingual civilisations such as Russian and Nigerian states, the features of heterogeneity may only be discussed. This could be established on separate linguistic clans, tribes, nationalities, nations, or countries. For example, if the community was homogeneous in all areas, such as clans, tribal ties and nations, it would have been pointless for it to render bilingual education system. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to note that policies aimed at bilingual education system and relationships in a community would be unachievable. Significant to the discourse on bilingual education is the work of Lewis (1981). Through a research entitled: "*Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*", the scholar identified the most prominent variability that is intended to adapt or promote bilingual education. He noted that "linguistic" is quite important in this respect. In examination of linguistic variety in multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies such as the Russian state, varying examples of heterogeneity are needed to be put in place. Lewis says that such characteristics of heterogeneity might be present in many combinations and are generally linked to linguistic variations at various levels (Lewis, 1981). Multi-national and multi-ethnic societies such as Russia and Nigeria cannot be separated as recommended by scholars from these heterogeneity characteristics. As multi-national and multi-ethnic societies, Russia and Nigeria cannot be separated from these "heterogeneous characteristics" as recommended by existing literature. When educating a kid on bilingual training, Lewis advises that educators should take as many language factors as possible into consideration, since we don't only aim for the teaching of two languages in the bilingual programme, but for the training of persons with skills in relation to two languages (Lewis, 1981, p. 5).

Soviet Union language policy was therefore a must and linguistic diversity is still a major component for Contemporary Russia since 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet

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Union. Notably, Russian bilingualism remains a substantial priority established by the Russian government and a topic of education planning and teaching quite strongly. Russian was an essential part of unexpected, unforeseen bilingualism. This fact must be established. Many citizens who function in other languages apart from Russian will usually know Russian. They acquire this as a second language. Thus, they acquire Russian in mixed communities or at school. They commonly speak Russian. The linguistic planning procedures of the Russian Federation since 1991 cannot be described without a very brief reference to the historical, political and social results brought forth by the language and nationality policies that have been used in the former Soviet Union for decades.

The ideological foundations of Soviet nationality policy and nationalisation in Republics were rather paradoxical, since, on average, the Soviet regime captioned the nationalities with a well-defined political and territorial status, including those that had not yet developed in totality, leading to a nation-building process. These activities, on the other hand, were conducted in tandem with a progressive censorship of national historical cultures which maintained only the most ethnographic and folklore components. It can also be argued that the remote nationalities were not seen by the Soviet Marxism Leninists as deeply entrenched societies in the contemporary economic and political structures, other than as folk or ethnologic nations, according to Gellner's proposal, for the establishment of nations in the modernisation processes. Nonetheless, following the revolution *korenizatsiia* was the natural foundation of the Bolshevik nationalist programme. This was a format that would provide free exercise of such rights for the countries whose collective rights were refused and suppressed throughout the Tsarist period. These were all conducted within the framework of socialist construction, in order to conclude that national sovereignty alone was not a solution to all national, cultural, social, political and economic developmental difficulties.

In the case of the Soviet Union the various linguistic policies are one of the most major accomplishments of the authoritarian rule, in as much as they cannot be separated by alterations in the causal links of pressures within the upper echelons of the state and the federative republics from the political, social and economic incident that happened throughout seven decades. Modernisation of the Soviet economy and the Soviet society has also helped to strengthening the Soviet Union's demographic structure. The conflicts caused by language interactions with other variables such as the number of linguistic and national groupings are particularly notable in metropolitan settings. It is also important to note the experience of contacts with other ethnic groups, the geographical situation or the specific

linguistic, religious and cultural relationships. At the same time, Soviet society's new demands, principally, industrialisation, technological difficulties and socialism-building, necessitated the establishment of a new society with a stable and defined people. Individuals must be able to use new technological and intellectual instruments to carry out and implement state-designed initiatives. Importantly, in a country that did not have objective circumstances for consolidating it, the Socialist Revolution was taking place. In other words, the population structure was predominately shaped by the peasants. This was because urban peasantry was sparse and Western standards of industrialisation were still low and the population developed in terms of politics and culture, even though after a long civil war, the new regime managed to establish new political institutions. However, a dramatic transformation in the country's social, political, cultural and economic makeup was necessary for the consolidation of a new State and the creation of Socialism.

The most efficient and timely way to promote or neutralise non-Russian nationalities and to indoctrinate in them, the new political system, was to use indigenous languages as being among the principal instruments of this learning process and changes, as far as industrialisation of the USSR was a necessary condition to its own survival. A novel system of education and new cultural, ideological and communication fields in many languages were consequently needed. Thus, linguistic policy was one of the primary nucleuses of Soviet nationality policy from the very outset. The Narkomnats implemented their language policy through four primary actions. These include the choice for the populations of the autonomous territorial entities of a standard code and its distribution, as a common language of communication.

The vocabulary has been modernised to meet the demands of a modern industrial society. New alphabets for the indigenous languages were reformed or created. In the periphery areas, meanwhile, the broad literacy drives in the new national school system, by teaching the autochthonous languages. Simply said, soviet language policy has not only fostered Russian as the lingua franca utilised for the entire Union and for the connection between Republics, but has also enhanced and greatly improved the significance of the respective Republics, particularly languages of the nationalities. Unlike in Nigeria, where ethnic languages are disregarded in relation to governmental policy formulation and implementation regarding indigenous education, the Soviet language policy and implementation represent the conflicts between the centralisation and decentralisation mechanisms and those of advancement and repression, which are the primary features of Soviet policies divided among class stratagems.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

In Nigeria, indigenous education system has failed to put the multiethnic and multilingual natures of the country into consideration. As a result, inequality in the spread of education significantly abounds. It is very significant to note that language in education policy is not so much adhere to, thus, it over the years, becomes a mere declaration of intent, as a practice, rather than being implemented. On the contrary, language in education policy has been very pronounced and enforced in the Soviet Union. That significantly helped the USSR, as individual language backgrounds are recognized and in regional education system. Nigeria therefore has a major lesson to learn from the language policy of the Soviet Union. Within the indigenous education, the education system of the Soviet Union addressed linguistic and cultural diversity. This significantly reflected in disallowing inequality and irresponsibility the Soviet indigenous education system. It is very pertinent that Nigeria look into the course of history and to address inequality and irresponsibility in the educational sector. This is very important because of the important roles that education plays in a nation. Like in the USSR, Nigeria should deploy functional measures in formation and implementation of mass literacy campaign which will touch every region or state of the country. Mass literacy campaign should be in three folds namely: 1, mass children literacy campaign; 2, mass adult literacy campaign; and 3, mass female child literacy campaign.

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