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An assessment of Governor Henry Seriaki Dickson's Educational policies on Tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, 2012-2019

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Abstract

Since 1996, successive administrators of Bayelsa state have adopted different educational policies, intended at bringing development of the educational sector. Similar policies implemented by the various governments were free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary levels. Between 2012 and 2019, Gov. Dickson introduced and implemented new educational polices in the state. Despite the contributions of the various administrations, the educational sector in the State still remains largely underdeveloped. Schools still lack basic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, teachers/lecturers and staff quarters. Workers in the sector are also poorly remunerated. There are studies on policies of past administrators including Gov Dickson. But there is none specifically on the impact of Dickson's policies on tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. This study is therefore novel, because it fills that existing lacuna. Researchers and administrators involved in policy making and implementation would find this study useful as reference material. Utilised in the study were oral literature, obtained through interviews, conducted in Ministry of Education, Primary and Secondary Schools Boards, and tertiary institutions in Bayelsa state. Textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet sources were also obtained from libraries and the internet. The sources were critically analyzed to extract facts. Findings of the work show that, Gov. Dickson's policy of free and compulsory education, implemented in the form of providing free textbooks, uniforms, and non-payment of school fees and others, impacted positively on primary and secondary schools. But, the implementation of subvention policy in tertiary institutions retarded the development of institutions.

Keywords: Henry Seriaki Dickson, Educational, Policies, Tertiary Institutions and Bayelsa State.

Introduction

Bayelsa state was created along Bauchi, Ebonyi, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Gombe and Ekiti states on 1st October, 1996 by Gen. Sani Abacha. Between 1996 and 2000, the State was ruled by four (4) military administrators, four (4) civilian governors and two (2) acting governors. The military administrators were; Col. Philip Ayeni (7 Oct. 1996-28 Feb. 1997), Commissioner of Police, Habu Daura (28 Feb. 1997-27 June1997), Col. Omoniyi Caleb Olubolade (27 June1997-9 July,

1998) and Col. Paul Edo Obi (9 July, 1998- 29 May, 1999). The civilian governors include; Chief Diepreye Solomon Peter Alamieyeseigha, (29 May, 1999-9 Dec. 2005), Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (9 Dec. 2005-29 may 2007), Chief Timipre Malyn Sylver (29 may 2007-16 April, 2008 and 27 may 2008- 27 January2012) and Hon. Henry Seriaki Dickson (27 May 2012-29 May, 2000). The State has also had the rule of two acting governors namely; Rt (Hon) Werinipre Seibarugu (16 April, 2008-27 may 2008) and Rt. (Hon) Nestor Binabo (27 January 2012-14 February, 2012).[1]

His Excellency, (Hon.) Henry Seriaki Dickson was sworn in as Governor of Bayelsa State on 27 May 2012. This followed his election as Governor of the State, through an election conducted on the 11 of February by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). Before becoming governor, Dickson saw Bayelsa as a state that lacked development and was backward. A situation he attributed to failure of his predecessors to adhere to the vision and plans of the founding fathers of the State. He declared that, if he is elected as governor, he would adopt policies and programmes that would ensure the realization of the visions of the founding fathers. He therefore, christened his political platform the "Restoration Movement". During the campaigns for the gubernatorial elections, Dickson promised to declare emergency on the educational sector if elected as governor. Consequently, during his inaugural speech on 14th February, 2012, he proclaimed an immediate commencement of free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary levels in the state. The proclamation was quoted by Sapele (2023) as follows:

> *In the course of our campaigns, we promised massive investment in education, critical infrastructure, heath, as we as peace and security. The development of human capital is our most compelling and urgent need. That is why we promised you free and compulsory education for all our children in primary and secondary schools with emphasis on computer literacy, science and technology. I hereby announce with effect from today the take-off of free and compulsory education at primary and secondary school levels across Bayelsa State. The rebuilding of our educational infrastructure commences forth with. Our curriculum will emphasize the study of Ijaw language, history and cultures.*[2]

[1] "History of Bayelsa State, List of Past Governors from 1966", Informedia, Google, last modified 2019, https://infomediang.com/bayelsa-state-history-and-past-governors).
[2] Frank Funkiye Sapele, "Public Policy and Development Problems of in Bayelsa State: Review of the Educational Policy of Former Governor Seriaki Dickson Administration" *RUJMASS 11, no. 1*(*June2023*): 209

Dickson's Free and Compulsory Education Policy

Governor Dickson's free education policy was implemented in the form non-payment of tuition fees by pupils and students, provision of free books, uniforms and feeding for pupils and students in primary and secondary schools in the State. After the declaration of the Free and Compulsory Education Policy, Hon, Dickson' embarked on the renovation of four (4) hundred out of 537 primary schools in the state. In each of the schools, he also built a head teacher's quarters equipped with electricity and toilet facilities. Pupils in all the primary school were also provided with free school uniforms and textbooks.

Before Gov. Dickson's administration; primary schools in the state were funded by the local government councils. Due to neglect of this sector by the councils, primary school teachers were owed backlog of salaries. There was also shortage of teachers in the schools. School buildings were also in various stages of dilapidation. Due to the above factors, primary school teachers often embarked on strikes, and left the schools closed often. But following the declaration of the policy, Dickson also took over the payment of primary school teachers from the local Government councils in the state.[3]

At the secondary school level. Dickson also turned fifteen (15) of the existing schools including, Model Secondary School Ekeremor, Bishop Dimiery Government School, Yenagoa, Amarata Girls Secondary School, Yenagoa and Kaiama Grammar School, Kaiama to model schools. He also established the Ijaw National Academy Kaiama, the Sports Academy Asoama and Bayelsa Driving School Elebele as specialised schools. The Ijaw National Academy Kaiama, was established to promote the teaching and development of the Ijaw language. The Sports Academy Asoama, was established to promote sporting skills among youths in the state. The Driving School Elebele, was established to train drivers for the various sectors in the society. Each of the schools except the Driving School, Elebele was equipped with Information Communication Technology (ICT) and science laboratories. The schools were also equipped with libraries and school field with other sporting facilities. In the boarding schools, both students and staff were provided free accommodation and feeding.

Dickson explained that, he declared free and compulsory education at primary and secondary levels, and established boarding schools across the state to encourage the education of Ijaw people, provide technical skill, as well as democratise education in the state.[4] In an interview with Daily Times newspaper on August 15, 2019 at Abuja, Dickson claimed to have built more schools than any other governor in Bayelsa before him. The statement is captured by Ihesilu Grace thus;

[3] J. Osahon, "Bayelsa Government takes over Payment of Primary Schools Teachers' Salaries," *The guardian*, January 13, 2018, https://guardian.ng>bayelsa-government-take,
[4] Henry Dickson, " Why I Declared Free Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in Bayelsa", *Premium Times* October 17, 2017, www.premiumtimesng.com.

> *Currently, we have 10, 000 final year students in 15 government owned public secondary schools and we keep them in the schools. Their fees are free, food is free. Everything is free. 10,000 students from across the state are being accommodated by us on free education and free feeding.*[5]

Dickson's free and compulsory education policy instigated more enrolment in primary and secondary schools, as well as better performance in national exams. The *Vanguard* News paper stated that in 2017, students of Bayelsa State rose from poor rating to fifth position, among the 36 states of Nigeria, Senior School Certificate (SSC) examination by the West African Examination Council (WAEC).[6]

Tertiary Institutions in Bayelsa State

In 2012, when (Hon) Dickson became Bayelsa State Governor, there were just five (5) state owned tertiary institutions, and two (2) Federal Government owned tertiary institutions in Bayelsa state. The state owned institutions were; Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State College of Education, Okpoama, now Isaac Jaspa Boro College of Education, Sagbama, the College of Education, Sagbama, College of Arts and Science, Yenagoa and College of Health Technology, Otuogidi. Those owned by the Federal government were Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, and the Federal University, Otueke. Dickson increased the number of tertiary institutions in the state by establishing five more institutions namely; the Bayelsa State Maritime Academy, Okpoama, the Bayelsa State Institute of Tourism, Catering and Hotel Management, Elebele, the University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State Medical University, Yenagoa and the Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Aleibiri. The Bayelsa State Maritime Academy Okpoama was established in 2012, due to protest by people of Okpoama, over the relocation of the state College of Education from the area to Sagbama. In 2012, the Bayelsa State Institute of Tourism, Catering and Hotel Management were also established, to provide training on tourism, Catering and hotel management for people of the state and beyond.

Tertiary institutions in Bayelsa state were directly funded by the state government until 2018. The state government provided infrastructure, paid salaries of staff and provided local and international scholarships for deserving staff. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and Educational Trust Fund (ETF), also provided infrastructure, post graduate scholarships, as well as funded local and international training programmes for staff in the institutions. Infrastructure provided by (TETFUND/ETF) in the Niger Delta University included, the Faculty

[5] Ihesilu. G. "I've built more schools than any governor-Dickson" *Daily Times,* August 15, 2019. *http://dailytimesng.com/ive-built-more-schools-than-any-governor-dickson/*
[6] Dennis, A. "Bayelsa Educational Renaissance: The story of Gov. Dickson's six years in office" *Vanguard* 15th, 2018, www.vamguardngr.com

of Arts Block, Faculty of Agriculture Block , the E. Library and others. Shell, Agip, Chevron and other multinational oil companies operating in the state also provided infrastructure and scholarship to students, as part of their corporate social responsibility projects and programmes. In 2019, chevron donated the Niger Delta University Demonstration Schools (NDUS) building, located at the new site to NDU. Individuals also provided infrastructure in the schools. For instance, Prof. Nimbofa Ayawei, the first PhD product of the Niger Delta University, built and donated a Central Science Laboratory Building to the school in 1999.

Governor Dickson's Policies on Tertiary Education

Gov. Henry Seriaki Dickson introduced and implemented new policies on tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The new policies were the policy of subvention, the policy for automatic employment of first class graduates and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) holders in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

The subvention policy

The subvention policy was introduced by Gov. Dickson in 2017. It was a policy of funding tertiary institutions in Bayelsa through the provision of subvention. Under the policy, the state government provided the institutions with a subvention amount monthly. The money was to be used for salaries for staff and overhead cost for the institutions. In a radio broadcast on 25th, January, 2017, Gov. Dickson declared that the state Government would no longer pay the salaries of NDU staff directly. But, it was going to give the institution, the sum of two hundred million naira (200,000,000:00) only as subvention. This was at a time when the staff salaries of the University amounted to four hundred and seventy-seven million, nine hundred and eleven thousand nine hundred and sixty eight naira fifty two kobo (N477, 911,965, 52. The governor also promised to implement a subvention for the Isaac Jaspa Boro College of Education, Sagbama and College of Health Technology, Otuogidi.[7]

Implementation of the policies began in the tertiary May 2018, when Prof. Gowon IDoumiekumo was the Vice Chancellor of the University. Prof. Donbebe Wankasi [8], who served as Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics under Prof. Ogoni, and later Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration under Prof. I Doumiekumo stated that, the initial attempt to introduce subvention and downsizing of staff policy in NDU, did not succeed. This was because; the Pro Chancellor, Prof. T.T. Isoun and Vice chancellor Prof. Ogoni then declined to implement the policy in the University. According to Comrade Fakidouma W. Wilcox, a former

[7] NAAT, NASU and SSANU, NDU Chapter, "Joint Action Committee Position on Government Proposed Planned Downsizing and Non Payment of Staff Salaries", February, 15th, 2018, Position Paper to Management of Niger Delta University.
[8] Wankasi Donbebe, (Vice Chancellor Administration, NDU), in discussion with the author, Yenagoa,November2022

Chairman, Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU),[9] and Comrade Amiri boloumbele, an executive of Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Associated Institutions (NASU)[10], the policy was introduced in the University because Prof. Gowon Idoumiekumo, former DVC Academic and later Vice Chancellor of the NDU assured Gov. Dickson that it was doable. The subvention policy of Hon. Dickson impacted the tertiary institutions very adversely. The amount provided as subvention for the institutions was not enough to pay salaries of respective institutions. As such, monthly salaries payment in the institutions was delayed. In addition to the amount provided, managements of the institutions sourced for funds elsewhere to augment the amount provided by government to pay salaries. The Vice Chancellor of the Niger Delta University, Prof. Gowon IDoumiekumo, claimed, he borrowed the sum of one hundred and fifty million naira (N150,000,000) monthly, to augment the subvention amount to pay three thousand, five hundred and fifty nine (3,559) staff salaries of the University for a time.

Due to the subvention, overhead payment for certain categories of staff in NDU was stopped. Management of the University also stopped the provision of rims of paper, files and other stationeries to faculties and departments. Provision of electricity on campus by management in NDU also dwindled. Consequently, staff and students resorted business centres outside the University for their typing, printing and photocopying of documents and exam papers at extra cost. Contract and adjunct staff of the University were also laid off, because, the management could no longer pay for their services. For instance, Prof. John Buseri, the pioneer VC of the University, also left for the Federal University, Otueke, to continue as contract staff. Some full time lecturers, who had opportunity, also left the University to others, because promotions were no longer implemented and arrears not paid. In Faculty of Arts alone, more than five (5) professors left for universities in Rivers State. These situations made the institutions to clamour for outright abolition or increase in the subvention amount to the institutions. Owing to these demands, Gov. Dickson introduced the policy of Downsizing Staff of Tertiary Institutions.

Hon. Seriki Dickson's Policy of Downsizing of Staff of Tertiary Institutions

On several occasions, Gov. Seriaki Dickson, stated that the workforce in the Niger Delta University, College of Education and college of Heath Technology was over bloated. As such, he would take measures to reduce the workforce in the institutions. Implementation of the downsizing policy began with verification of staff of the institutions. After the exercise, government published the names of four hundred and twelve (412) staff of the University for re-verification on 16th December, 2017. Sixty–seven of those affected appeared before the Bayelsa State Civil Service Commission, headed by Dr P. Singabele.

[9] Fakidouma W. Wilcox,(a former Chairman, Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, NDU Chapter) in discussion with the author, Yenagoa, September 2022
[10] Amiri boloumbele, (Ex- officio, Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Associated Institutions), Amassoma, November, 2022

The rest three hundred and forty-five (345) appeared before the Judiciary Service Commission of inquiry on pay roll fraud, headed by Justice Doris Adokeme on age related issues. The panels of inquiry, compelled, some of the people to go on retirement at age sixty (60), as against the sixty-five years of retirement that applied to universities in the country. Owing to these developments, the Senior Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Associated Institutions (NASU) and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), NDU Chapter, wrote a petition letter titled " Petition on the Forceful and Unlawful Retirement of our Staff at Sixty Years as Against Sixty Five Years" addressed to the Chairman, House Committee on Education, Bayelsa State House of Assembly (NDU JAC of NAAT, NASU and SSANU Letter to BYSHA Committee on Education, 25th January, 2018[11].

Later, Dickson forwarded a memo, dated 7th February, 2017 and signed by Dr. P. F. Singabele, the secretary of the Tertiary Education Reform Advisory Committee (TERAC), to NDU and the Colleges. The memo requested management of the institutions to provide nominal rolls, pay rolls, classification of staff according to academic and non-academic staff, departments and units, National University Commission (NUC) guidelines and other relevant documents. Owing to the memo, the NDU Governing Council held an emergency meeting at the senate Building of the University on Wednesday March 7, 2018. The council headed by Prof. Steve Azaiki, Pro Chancellor of the University, resolved that, a list of non-academic staff, that would be sent to the government be compiled. Consequently, on 12th March, 2018, a list of one thousand seven hundred (1700), out of two thousand five hundred and seventy six (2,576) non-academic staff was published. The affected staffers were instructed to report to the Government Report Implementation Committee (GRIC), under the Ministry of Education for redeployment to ministries and University of Africa Toru-Orua. Similarly, the College of Education, Sagbama, and College of Heath Technology, Otuogidi, also published lists of non-academic staffers in the institutions with similar directives. These publications necessitated reactions from individual staffers and unions.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of NDU Chapter wrote a protest letter titled "Stand of JAC on Current Issues in the Niger Delta University". The seven (7) paged letter dated 20th March, 2018 written to the Pro Chancellor of the University, addressed several issues including subvention, downsizing, forceful retirement of non teaching staff, non- payment of promotion/annual incremental arrears, delay in payment of salaries, lack of infrastructural development among others.[12]

[11] NAAT, NASU and SSANU, NDU Chapter, "Petition on the Forceful and Unlawful Retirement of our Staff at Sixty Years as against Sixty Five Years", January, 25th, 2018, Letter to the Chairman, Bayelsa State House of Assembly Committee on Education.
[12] NAAT, NASU and SSANU, NDU Chapter, "Stand of JAC on Current Issues in the Niger Delta University", March, 20th, 2018, Letter to the Pro Chancellor of Niger Delta University.

National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), NDU Chapter, also independently wrote a letter titled "Rejoinder to State Redeployment list" and dated 13/April/2018 to the Pro Chancellor of the University. In Paragraph seven (7), the Association claimed that, some of their staff reported to the Government Report Implementation Committee as directed by the 12th March, 2018 publication of the Redeployment List. But, the Committee claimed there was no directive from government asking them staff of Niger Delta University to report to it.[13]

In view of the above developments, the NDU management withdrew the list of one thousand seven hundred (1700) persons from the notice board. An ad-hoc committee was also set up to review the issue. The committee reported there was need for the downsizing of the institutions. This position was not acceptable to non-academic unions in the University. Hence, the Joint Action Committee (JAC), NDU Chapter, in a letter to the Pro Chancellor, dated 09/May/ 2018 and titled "Resolution of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of NAAT, NASU AND SSANU" reported that the Ad-hoc Committee report did not follow Prof. Odiowei Committee or Mieyebo Committee reports in their report. (JAC) further stated that the withdrawal of the one thousand seven hundred (1700) staff from the University would affect accreditation of programmes in the institution.[14]

Amidst the protests, the management of NDU proceeded to publish the names of one thousand, seven hundred and forty (1,747) non teaching staff of the University, for Forceful Retrenchment from April, 2018. The staffers were then paid May, June and July salaries, as severance package. Following the development, HIJAC, an umbrella body of non- teaching staff in the three affected institutions in the State, filed a case registered at the Industrial Court, Yenagoa on 5th April, 2018 as suit No: NICN/YEN/26/2018. The defendants in the matter were the Bayelsa State Government and the Management of the three institutions.

Owing to the forceful disengagement of staff, the affected staff and some persons in the Amassoma community sealed the main gate of NDU, with welded iron bars on 22nd May, 2018. Few hours after the sealing, a team of armed policemen, led by an Assistant Commissioner of Police, in Bayelsa, enforced the unsealing of the gate. According to Chief Opukeme Ibomo, a staff of NDU and a chief in Amassoma[15], confrontations between the police team and the protesters, resulted in some persons, sustaining severe injuries and a number of deaths. Among the dead were Jacob Yogha, Godnoie, Eze felagha and others.

[13] National Association, of Academic Technologist, NDU Chapter, "Rejoinder to Staff Redeployment list", April, 13th, 2018, Letter to the Pro Chancellor of Niger Delta University.
[14] NAAT, NASU and SSANU, NDU Chapter, "Resolution of Joint Action Committee of NAAT, NASU and SSANU", May, 9th , 2018, Letter to the Letter to the Pro Chancellor of Niger Delta University.
[15] Opukeme Ibomo, (Staff of NDU and a chief of Amassoma), in discussion with the author, January, 2023

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Some of the injured persons included; Paul Orus, Doupere Dorgu, Alaowei Bide. and Oyinbuna. Angered by the death of their sons, the Amassoma Community proceeded to organize procession with pictures of Gov. Seriaki Dickson and Prof. Idoumiekumo in the community. It was reported that, the pictures were later buried at a sacred forest of the community. The forceful disengagement of staff caused shortage of staff in virtually all the departments in the affected institutions. For instance, out of one hundred and eighty-six (186) security personnel in NDU, one hundred and fifty (150) were retrenched. Among the retrenched were large number of cleaners, labourers and security. The number of security, cleaners and labourers left became too few to cope with the securing, cleaning and clearing of the four (4) campuses of the institution. Therefore, lawns in the campuses were overwhelmed with overgrown bushes. The situation exposed staff and students to the danger of reptile attacks. Shortage of cleaners resulted in the overflow of debris in the waste bins, unclean toilets and surroundings. Therefore, the University surroundings became unkempt and toilets unusable by staff. The remaining securities were made to secure large areas. Hence, there were pronounced security challenges in the schools. In acknowledgment of these challenges, the management engaged the services of private security, to augment the existing ones. Yet, security on campus remained a daunting challenge.

Staff affected by the disengagement also felt adverse impacts. According to Perediegha Kayopa, the secretary of NASU, in the school[16], a total number of Ninety eight (98) retrenched staff of the University, died between August, 2018 and October 2023. He claimed most of the number died as a result of the disengagement. This is because, some died of lack of money to buy medicine to treat ailments they had. Others, committed suicide out of the frustration of their wives leaving them, for their inability to no longer provide for them. There were also those whose children dropped out of school, because, they could no longer pay their school fees.

The Policy of Funding Education through Loans

Successive military administrators and governors of Bayelsa State, paid indigent undergraduate and post graduate students of the state bursary. Navy Captain Ayeni paid the bursaries for 1996 and 1997 at a stretch in November, 1997. In the online Sahara Reporters News of 4th April, 2022, Hon. Mike Olomu, a former Special Assistant to Gov. Timipre Sylva, stated that the administration of Gov. Timipre Sylva paid indigent Bayelsa students bursary of N1.5 billion between 2007 and 2011[17]. Bursaries paid by the administrators were meant to assist the students pay school fees, procure books and other school related challenges.

[16] Perediegha Kayopa, (secretary of NASU, NDU Chapter), in discussion with the author, January, 2023

[17] "NDU Students Fault Dickson over 100m Bursary Approval" www.loadedvilla.com.ng>blog>ndu-stu....

On 31st March, 2017, Gov. Dickson introduced Bayelsa Education Development Trust Fund (BYEDTF). In June, 2017, he also inaugurated a 14 member Bayelsa Education Development Trust Fund Board (BYEDTFB) with Prof. T. T. Isoun, as its pioneer chairman. Thereafter, He gave the sum of One Hundred Million Naira (N100m) to the Board, to commence operations. Funds for the scheme were also derived from taxes deducted from civil and public servants under the state government. The scheme also received support from corporate bodies and individuals. The Aiteo Group, an indigenous oil company operating in Bayelsa State donated the sum of five hundred million naira (N500m) to the scheme in 2019. In 2022, the IDC, a body of Ijaw professional resident abroad also indicated willingness to partner with the scheme. The scheme enabled indigent undergraduate and graduate students of the state, to borrow from the board to pay for their educational needs. Applicants accessed the funds through application letter signed by their school authorities, including Heads of Departments. Beneficiaries of the funds were to pay back the loan after graduation.

The Policy of automatic Employment of First Class Graduates and PhD Holders in Tertiary Institutions in Bayelsa State

Gov. Dickson introduced the policy of automatic employment of first class graduates from Bayelsa in 2018. He made a declaration of the policy during an induction ceremony for 31 First Class Graduates, at Government House, Yenagoa[18]. According to the reports, the first class graduates were to be listed by the State Civil Service Commission and sent to different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) including tertiary institutions. Under the Governor's administration, over one hundred (100) first class graduates were employed. In 2019, Mr. Clinton Areprekumo, a First Class Graduate of Federal University, Otueke was employed as a lecturer in the Department of History and Diplomacy, Niger Delta University.

The Policy for automatic employment was also extended to PhD holder in the Bayelsa and other Ijaw speaking states. Governor Dickson made the announcement of the policy while inaugurating the Committee for employment of PhD holders across Ijaw land on 3rd May, 2019[19]. The beneficiaries were to be listed by the Committee and sent to the state owned tertiary institutions for interview and employment. Iworiso-Markson, Dickson's Commissioner for Information stated that, the policy was intended at repositioning and making the educational sector viable. *THISDAY LIVE* online of 7th July, 2019 stated that Gov. Dickson employed over one hundred and twenty (120) PhD holders in Bayelsa State during his administration[20]. In 2019, Dr. Iti Orugbani, was also

[18] "Dickson signs executive order for automatic employment for first class graduates" The *Vanguard* , October 30th, 2018, www.vanguardr.com
[19] Gov. Dickson Offers Automatic Employment to PhD Holders" May 3rd,2019, www.nairaand.com>gov-dickson-
[20] Emmanuel Addeh "Dickson Offers PhD Holders from Ijaw Automatic Jobs" THISDAY LIVE, July 7th, 2019, www.thisdaylive.com>2019/05/05

employed lecturer in the Department of History and Diplomacy, Niger Delta University, as a beneficiary of the policy. Governor Dickson policy of employment of First Class graduates and PhD holders provided opportunity for Ijaws in all Ijaw speaking states of Nigeria and in Diaspora, through those schemes; over one thousand three hundred (1300) persons were employed. The employment served as means of livelihood and economic development for the employees and their dependencies.

Conclusion

Gov. Seriaki Dickson implemented his Educational policies through a number of institutions. The Bayelsa State Ministry of Education served as the major organ for the making and implementation of Dickson's policies. The Bayelsa State Post Primary Schools Board (BSPPSB) and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) coordinated employment, as well as posting of teachers at the primary and secondary school levels. Principals in secondary schools and Head teachers in primary schools coordinated the distribution of free textbooks, uniforms and other items in the schools. Scholarships and bursary payment under Dickson was mostly implemented by the Bayelsa State Scholarship Board (BSSB). The Board, conducted enumeration exercises and coordinated the disbursement of scholarship funds. In the tertiary institutions, the policies of subvention, downsizing and employment was implemented by the governing councils and managements. In addition to ratifying the policies made by Gov. Dickson, the councils also made policies pertaining to administration in the schools. Under Dickson's regime, over two thousand (2000) staffers of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State were forcefully retrenched. The retrenchment impacted on the institutions adversely in many areas.

On 6th April, 2022, Hon Justice Bashar Alkali of the Industrial Court (IC), Yenagoa passed judgment in favour of staff of the tertiary institution forcefully retrenched by Gov. Dickson. The Judge declared that the requirement and procedures for disengagement of the staff were not followed. He therefore, directed that, Mr Tom Friday and the other seven hundred and seventy five (775) staff be reinstated to their respective offices. The staff should also be paid their salaries and other entitlement due them from 7th May, 2018 till date. In compliance with the judgment, Gov. Douye Diri reinstated the affected staff in October, 2023.

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