

# DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTS OF REGIONAL DIFFERENTIALS IN EDUCATION POLICIES IN NIGERIA.

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*Nigeria at independence recognised the importance of education for the general development process, without due consideration for demographic implications. The efforts expended on the education sector by both government and private organisations and individuals have yielded considerable achievements in terms of provision of skilled manpower and improved literacy rates over the years. The achievements, however, remain below the desired expectations for the country in general and specific regions of the country. Economic factors, particularly in recent periods, hinder the achievement of desired targets as regards education, and are also threatening previous achievements.*

*The emphasis on the use of the English language for educational activities at the introduction of Western education, which is associated with Christianity, is identified as explaining the observed regional disparity in the country, using enrolment rates for different levels of education and literacy rates. The continued emphasis on the use of English to the detriment of indigenous language, scholars have also argued, limits the effectiveness of education.*

*The observed regional differences in education are reflected in demographic indices such as the crude birth, and death rates, total fertility, infant mortality, contraceptive prevalence and labour force participation rates, which are in favour of the southern part of the country with better educational status. Movements in the desired direction for demographic indices, which include a lower population growth rate, will be enhanced by further improvement in formal and informal education, particularly in the northern region. There is therefore a need to identify the minimum required education which will lead to changes.*

*The problems faced by a multilingual nation, such as Nigeria, adopting a national language or several languages for educational purpose, particularly in view of the poor economic status, are discussed and recommendations for improving the educational situation are proffered.*