

CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTED MEASURES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The importance of planning in education is increasingly being felt particularly in Nigeria where the need to satisfy the unprecedented demand for education, and where the need to provide the manpower required for development, have occasioned tremendous expansion of education at all levels. However, the paper examines numerous challenges in educational planning that stand as obstacles towards successful implementation of Nigerian educational system. These challenges are poor management information system, rising of cost of education., change of government, poor techniques of data collection and banking, lack of continuity of our educational system and standard information bank. The challenges persisted to the detriment of any meaningful educational planning in Nigeria. Finally, suggested measures for effective educational planning in Nigeria are contained in this paper,

Introduction

The importance of educational planning cannot be over emphasized. This is because educational planning entails formal systematic rational designs on desired educational future goals (S;mda, 2006). Planning is the first step in any administrative function. It involves making arrangement for the future. It deals on how to use time, personnel and equipment in future. The future may begin with day, week, month or year. Plans are made after objectives or goals are set. Planning is usually regarded as a search for the best method of achieving these goals (Okeke, 1985; Ndu, 1991).

Poor planning and wrong projections have been found to be the main obstacles to the successful implementation of many educational policies and programmes. No any meaningful planning can take place in either developed or developing nations without reliable data on the population, human and material resources on the ground (Sanda, 2006).

Educational Planning

According to Longe (1988), cited in Sanda (2006), planning in general is a 'process of establishing priorities for future action in an attempt to solve economic problems which stem from the existence of scarce resources'. Planning, thus, implies given thoughts to priorities, and the goals and aspirations of the nation. He further pointed out that educational planning falls within the phases of planning, and it is basically concerned with the problem of allocating the limited resources devoted to the education sector.

Educational planning according to Adesina (1982), is a human activity that concerned with preparing sets of decisions for ensuring the achievement of future educational goals and values through effective use of the resources available for education. Educational planning is a process of analyzing the educational needs of the society and be able to make economically viable allocation of the available scarce resources for their educational development. Simply put, it is a process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future (Olubadewo, 1992).

It can- be-described from 'the above definitions that the target of educational planning is to change the present condition of things having in mind the future needs of the society. However, educational planning in Nigeria can be described from four different approaches.

These are:

(i) The Manpower Demand

The manpower demand approach in educational planning focuses on a country's manpower needs and labour absorption capacity. According to Owolabi, (1987); Adesina, (1982) planning is carried out here on the assumption that growth in the GNP correlates the quality of human resources. This means that, a country's educational programme and

resources are closely associated with the -quality of manpower in the economic sector. Similarly, the task of production of varied categories of skills for the country's labour market is saddled on education which in turn serves as a platform for economic development.

(ii) **The Social Demand**

According to Akanbou (1985), the social demand approach in educational planning dwells on the forecast of popular demand on education as a consumable good in the socio-economic life of the society. Furthermore, to plan education for a certain period, it will be in the interest of this approach to know how many children will be of school going age in pre -primary and primary school levels and determine candidates for secondary school levels as well as tertiary institutions and also examine what educational facilities are on ground and those that are not available for the educational programmes (Akanbou, 1985; Sanda, 2006).

(iii) **The Rate of Returns or Cost Benefit**

The rate of returns or cost benefit approach in educational planning tries to make the cost of education relates to the resultant education benefits (Oguntoye, 1987; Agabi, 1995). Education as investment on human capital can be embarked upon if the social and private benefits from such a venture amounts to, or is greater than the social private cost of the same. In other words, a community shall be willing to invest certain amount on an educational project provided that the benefits accruing from it will be equal to or more than the capital expended on it.

(iv) **Aggregative or synthetic**

In this approach, the three approaches discussed above i.e. the manpower requirement approach, the social demand approach are seen to complement one another in the educational planning process.

Challenges in Nigerian Educational Planning

Challenges in educational planning in Nigeria are numerous. These are:

(i) **Poor Management Information System:** Management Information System requires the use of computers for data and information processing and display for decisions on goals, trends, students and resources for programming very unfortunately, not enough such facility in our educational system or organizations. The management of the information system is very poor, the storage of information is also poor and retrieval of information is often very difficult (Agabi, 1995).

(ii) **Change of Government and Policies'** Changing of government had caused discontinuity and disrupts effective ..and systematic educational planning. Every government in Nigeria come with her educational policy which also call for her educational planning. For instance, the policy on education during Obasanjo's administration is far different from what is happening in the present government of Yar'Adua. In short, the political climate of Nigeria has not been conducive enough to give room for continuity of good educational plans and policies as every government wants to be identified with new educational policy.

Inconsistency in educational policy in Nigeria hampers the smooth implementation of the educational systems. The constant changes in Nigeria educational policies have done a lot of harm to our educational planning as well as our educational system. Nigeria so far had witnessed so many changes in her educational policy. This is detrimental to the education industry and the national development.

(iii) **Rising of Cost of Education in Nigeria:** "Optimization of resources" has been the major focus of educational planning. Such optimization according to Aderoumu and Ehiamezor (1981), leans heavily on the issues of costs. But sometimes owing to political and other pressures, there are unprecedented rise in students' enrolment, and as such the facilities required and the services demanded increase such that the budgetary allocation cannot possibly keep pace with the costs, then planning becomes an exercise in futility (Sanda, 2006).

(iv) **Poor Techniques of Data Collection and Banking:** In Nigeria generally, data is collected through the use of files, books, simple manual practices replete with difficulties, whereas data nowadays can be developed through the mechanized and electronic data processing techniques. In Nigeria, adequate economic feasibility is not tested and many of the educational expansion projects rest on the blind faith that somehow the necessary means for

achieving them would come. Many Nigerians are ignorant on the value of collecting and storing information. Many people rarely attach much value on collection of information. Officers collect information with laxity without attaching much importance to it.

(v) **Lack of Standard Information Bank in Nigeria:** In Nigeria, the controversial census figures constitute a factor militating against establishment of standard information Bank. The controversial census figures all alleged to have been falsified for political purposes. Therefore, statistical deviations and retrievals of information from the figures cannot be reliable for planning and other educational purposes.

Suggestions for Improvement in Educational Planning in Nigeria

Education has been seen as the greatest force that can be used to bring about changes in any country'. For effective educational planning in Nigeria, the following suggestions could be proffered for improvement.

1. The Nigerian ministries and institutions have to be conscientized on the usefulness of accurate data bank and can be required under compulsion to make annual returns to establish information centers for security and conservation purposes.
2. Effective information management system should be made in the country. There is need for modern information technology facilities like the computers, fax machines internet services etc for effective educational planning.
3. For any successful programme, there must be enough fund to serve as an important tool. Fund should be provided by the government for the provision of all necessary facilities to ensure effective educational planning in Nigeria.
4. Nigerian education policy should be allowed to crystallize and takes longer period before the introduction of a new policy. Constant changes of educational policy according to Sanda (2006), are causing a lot of havoc to educational planning in this country.
5. The educational planning process of the country must be future-oriented and goal-directed, based on the facts and not mere assumption.
6. Officers in the planning units should be made to change their altitude towards collecting and storing of information. They should be oriented on the value of information.
7. Management by objectives should be adopted by Nigerian educational planners. This means that the educational planners should place the educational policies based on objectives and guide for full implementation by the policy implementers.

Conclusion

Education is the greatest investment that a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources. Education constitutes the major instrument for sustainable human development as well as the fulcrum around which every other activity involves. It has been noted that nations which have recorded tremendous feats in the world heavily relied on the instrumentality of education. Therefore, effective planning of education is very important for every nation to succeed. It is the basis and fundamental pillar to the success of any programme. The country cannot continue to swing in darkness in its educational planning which has been hampering the educational system for long.

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