

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

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Abstract

The Nigerian educational system has battled with several obstacles in the past and continues to contend with the inability to enforce and actualize the realization and stability of a credible educational planning. To position and move the country forward, government, educational institutions, administrators, students, parents and other stakeholders in education have roles to play. More so, government needs to allocate more funds to education sector, recruits qualified teachers, improve teachers' welfare, train and retrain teachers so as to cope with new challenges, provide adequate infrastructures, facilities in tertiary institutions, curb corruption as well as examination malpractices. This paper highlights the challenges of educational planning in Nigeria, which includes low commitment of teachers, poor performance of students, and examination malpractice. Similarly, solutions includes adequate funding of education, recruitment of teachers, and curbing corruption. Approaches to educational planning in Nigeria are manpower, social demand and the cost-benefit approaches among other. Irrespective of the complex increase of enrollment in schools, educational planning must be improved and tailored towards the benefit of schools and the society.

Key Words: challenges, Constraints, solutions, Educational Planning and economic recovery.

Education is a remedy to individual and national development, a lifetime benefit if learning opportunity is improved. It is the application of a rational and systematic analysis to the process of Educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of student and the society. Appropriate planning do help to identify and avert various challenges encountered by educational planning. It is obvious that the population of peoples for the last ten years is not the same. Today, enrollment is more cumbersome. There are

also internal changes in educational structures, curriculum content and teaching method that hinder education in Nigeria. Although, modern educational planning is gearing towards a more beneficial attitude to planning, the need to accelerate the development of educational planning and avert some of the wastes and problems that occurs as a result of poor planning is necessary. The three major challenges affecting educational planning in Nigeria are poor planning and management, lack of human and material resources. Other challenges confronting the school system eventually emanate from control of teachers education programs, teachers training and retraining, the selection and organization of curriculum content, curriculum implementation and evaluation, development, distribution and use of teaching materials and the relevance of the curriculum to the need of the society.

Educational planning determines tertiary institutions quality which reflect in student educational performance. These problems are not peculiar to Nigeria alone but also to developed countries, who still compete for public funds. Educational plan can be achieved when resources, training and development have become indispensable tools that guide the allocation and utilization of educational resources in the management of school system. This is required to arrest areas of waste of resources to make educational planning more effective and achieve the desired goals of education in the nation. Educational planning prescribes the activities needed for education to achieve its goals. The purpose of planning is to ensure effectiveness of activities. Every educational system must develop a plan that ensures that appropriate products and services are offered to students, guides and directs planners and administrator on their roles in delivering the product and services for economic recovery.

Historical Antecedents

The principle and methods of educational planning were first broadly developed in the former USSR and after World War II, in socialist state, mainly in Central Europe and also in other parts of the world. The ideological control that characterized those societies led to highly centralized command-oriented education system, with considerable attention paid to control of the curriculum (Tolutope & Mainoma, 2014).

Certain historical antecedents have impact on how educational policies are formulated and implement in Nigeria. The Lagos colony, Southern and Northern protectorates which were amalgamated in 1914 and named Nigeria remained British colony till 1960 when it attained independence the colonial administrators introduced an indirect rule policy and administrative system with the existing traditional administrative structure, and used such for the administration of the Lagos colony, and the Southern and Northern protectorates. The indirect rule policy was organized for the Islamic education since the Christian missionaries were restricted from spreading both Christianity and western education to the region. This accounts for the differentials in the level of educational development between the North and the South. This has a lot

of implications for the planning of education in Nigeria. Of recent, the Federal Government has put in place several educational policies (such as the quota admission, the educationally advantaged and less disadvantaged area policies etc.) With a view to reduce the gap in North-South level of educational development. The colonial administrators adopted British form of education in Nigeria, hence the following school systems: primary, secondary, sixth form and higher education were introduced. After independence, it was discovered that the system of education did not meet the aspiration of Nigerians; hence the 6-3-3-4 educational policy was introduced in 1977. Which was later transformed to the present 9-3-4 educational system.

What is Planning

Planning is concerned with determining what is to be done, how it would be done and why it should be done so that the practical implication of planned decision may pragmatically be met later. This implies that planning is the linking pin between the present and the future because “the tomorrow is planned today (Maicibi, 2005). Similarly, planning is the principle of development and statement of clear goals, and the design of efficient and effective strategies to achieve these goals (Oke & Mainoma, 2014)

Concept of Educational Planning

Educational planning like planning itself is made up of sets of decisions about the future regarding education. Educational planning, according to Aderson (1967), “is the process of preparing a set of decisions for future action pertaining to education”. Educational Planning is the application of a rational and systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and the goals of the students and the society. Wombs (1974) in a UNESCO Publication titled, “What is Educational Planning?” states that in its broadest generic sense, “is the projection of education related activities in order to achieve set goals for the society and the students”. From the UNESCO point of view, the concept of educational planning involves a succession of interdependent actions namely clarification of educational goals, diagnosis of present conditions and recent trends, assessment of alternatives, translation of plans into action and lastly, evaluation and adjustment. This is the analytical approach to educational planning. It entails preparing and subsequently, evaluating a set of decisions for future use or action, aimed at achieving specific set of goals.

Category of Planning

Basically, planning is being categorized into three, as follows:

1. Short-Range planning
2. Medium-Range Planning
3. Long-Range Planning

1. Short Range Planning

This is done on the basis of immediate or medium-range plans. This category of planning tries to predict condition over the relative short period of time. Short-range planning is intended to make the long-range plan more realistic or operational. This could be a plan of 1-6 month or one year annual budgets which is design in a programme of action.

2. Medium Range Planning

It is the procedure through which specific functional plans related to a given periods of year are made. This entails a programmes of action designed for effective teaching and instruction over a period of five years. These enable strategies planners or administrators carried out activities to attain long-range objectives provided. Such objectives are translated into financial term in the form of profit and loss statement to show when and where to execute the plan made.

3. Long Range Planning

This is a programme of action designed for a longer period of time. Planner for sees effective teaching and instruction over a year or development of a school over a five-year period that would enhance the academic standards which the institution is set for.

Types of Planning

Reactive Planning: This type of planning occurs when the education planner or the administrator resolves issues as they occur in the institutions. The planner who adopts this type of planning relies heavily on the information and activities that deviate from the norms. Therefore, under reactive planning, abnormal events tend to form the basis for scheduling the programme of the institutions. As a result of this, the educational administrator - may be confused since the trend of events is unpredictable. The dynamic and complex human nature compounds the problems of an educational reactive planner.

The logical outcome of this type of planning are confusion, stress and frustration among the members of the institution and possibly, loss of confidence on their leaders. The overall result may be ineffectiveness, lack of a sense of direction and decline in productivity. Proactive planning can forestall all the potential confusions.

Negotiated Planning: It is planning based on bargain to arrive at a common position. With this type of planning, less emphasis is place in a rational examination of the issues to be resolved or the programme to be implemented. Instead, the final decision is heavily influenced by and during the planning process. The result of this type of planning is that education programmes are introduced with adequate consideration given to their desirability. This can lead to haphazard or even non implementation of some of the related programmes with the associated waste of valuable resources.

Systematic Planning: This type of planning is known as “step by step” kind of planning where the education planner identifies the needs of the institutions first before

planning. Here, the problems affecting the institutions are therefore, clearly stated and alternative requirements for problems solution identified. On this, the solutions that could enhance the resolution of the problem are chosen from the alternative requirements for problem solution identified. It is possible for educational planners to apply the negotiated and systematic types of planning concurrently. This is called the mixed type of planning.

Approaches to Educational Planning

With independence and the exit of the colonial rulers, the indigenous administrators were faced with how to survive, solve problems and possibly, make progress with regards to educational provision for their citizens. They therefore, had to look for approaches to plan the education. The four approaches are:

1. Manpower Requirement (MR) Approach

This is a method which is used to calculate the supply of trained manpower of various categories that are demanded or needed for the development of programmes of the country within a given period. It is chiefly aimed at maximizing productivity by matching expected demand for skills with supply. For instance, the number of scientists, teachers, engineers, doctors, or lawyers that will be required in the country can be planned for using educational institutions right from the admission through teaching to graduation and even post-graduation in-service training activities.

2. Social Demand (SD) Approach

This is the approach most favored by African educationalists and educationist. It refers to the aggregate of popular demand for education or the sum total of individuals demand for education at any given time and place. Where there are fewer places than candidates, social demand exceeds supply. By this approach, the educationalists insist that all those who demand education should be given the opportunity. Social demand approach is derived from the notion that planning should be used to produce the supply of educated manpower, irrespective of market demand.

3. The Costs-Benefits (CB) Approach

The approach is analytical way of making choices out of available alternatives: and thus, because of the level of analysis involved in it, it is something called Cost-Benefits Analysis approach. It is therefore; basically a cost of acquiring some additional levels or types of education and extra benefits that are likely to accrue to the individual or the society as a result of the provision of these types or levels of education.

4. The Rate of Return (RR) Approach

The Rate of Return (RR) approach is similar but in no way is it the same with the Cost-Benefits (CB) approach. By the RR approach, allocation of money to education is

based on the promise of the highest ratio of benefits to cost. If the highest benefits are accruing from investment in education, there should therefore be no limit to how much could be allocated to it. Wombs (1974:33-46) stated that, “the Rate of Return approach is quality of the same defects as the Cost-Benefits approach”. This is because it is difficult to calculate the future benefits of education.

Challenges of Educational Planning in Nigeria

One thing that continues to cripple and hinder most sectors in Nigeria is poor governance and management for which education sector is not excluded. The government attitude towards crucial problems of education especially its quality calls for great outcry. Hardly are schools and institutions renovated, acquire quality training facilities, for research grants released, increased and spent appropriately. The International Financial Institutions (IFTs) imposed funding as a condition for a sustainable developmental goal to educational planning, to inculcate the right values and attitude for survival of individual and Nigerian society, enable a child to acquire appropriate skills, ability and competencies, both mental and physical as equipment to live and contribute to the development of the society. Also to imbibe national consciousness and national unity and to train the mind in understanding the world around. The list below clearly illustrates the major challenges to educational planning in Nigeria.

1. Insufficient, low quality and low commitment of teachers,
2. Poor academic performance of students,
3. High level of examination malpractices,
4. Indiscipline of students,
5. Poor parenting/ guidance,
6. Wastage and,
7. Inappropriate policies, implementation and policies somersault.

Insufficient, low quality and low commitment of teachers

The role of teachers in the educational process cannot be under estimated. Teachers are the hinge on which the lever of educational system rests. In the national policy of education, it is stated that no nation can rise beyond the quality of teachers in the educational system. In spite of the role of teachers in education, educational system in Nigeria is characterized by inadequate teachers and the quality of the available ones in schools are quiet low, Maicihi (2003), stated that no matter the quantity and the quality of none human resources in an organization, such will amount to void if there is deficiency in the human resource that is needed to convert the none human resource to productive use.

Poor Academic Performance of Students

There has been increasing trends of failure in examination in Nigeria. Results of public examination such as the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), Universities Matriculation Examinations (UME), Unified Tertiary Institutions Examinations (UTME), Polytechnic and Colleges of Education (PCE) examinations etc. have not been encouraging at all. These examinations in the last three years reveals poor performance of candidate across the 36 state in Nigeria.

High Level of Examination Malpractices

Despite efforts to curtail examination malpractice, it is a menace that continues to rear its head at every attempt of conducting Senior School Certificate Examination, Unified Tertiary Institution Matriculation Examination etc. The case of malpractices at the lower educational level had resulted to the saturation of low quality of candidate into the tertiary institutions. Issues regarding candidates admitted on the bases of high scores in Senior School Certificate Examination being asked to withdraw due to academic incompetencies and inability to understand lectures is outrageous. This menace has also affected the quality of graduate of educational institutions and the value of degree certificates

Indiscipline of students

The level of indiscipline amongst students in educational institutions in Nigeria is unbelievable. During the time when Christian Missionaries were in control of educational system, the issues of moral were held in high esteem. They inculcated high level of discipline. Today, moral decadence has taken center stage in educational institutions. Cases of alcohol consumption, smoking of Indian hemp, rape, unauthorized dresses, stealing, absenteeism from class are a few among the negative attitude of students. At the tertiary level, student unrest and cultism have been prevalent. The incessant disruption of academic calendars has been a matter of concern to educational stakeholders.

Poor Parental/Guidance

Even though every parent wants the best for their children, they still fail to lay laws and set boundaries at home. Parent needs to evaluate their parenting skills and collaborate with teachers to know the areas their children need correction. Parents ought to correct their children at every error and never help them cover a lie. Families where there are physical and emotional abuses also affect children. Such forms of abuse makes children more prone to violent behaviors. They grow up believing that violence is the only way to solve issues. A child, who is constantly criticized, belittled is likely to have low esteem. Many parents and guidance lack care and protection for their children and wards. As such, no adequate provisions of basic need are provided

for their upkeep. Many parents are also in the habit of encouraging and paving ways for examination malpractices in order to qualify their children into higher institutions.

Wastage

Wastage has been a clog in the wheel of progress of education in Nigeria. In spite of the fact that many children of school-age don't have access to schools; many students are repeating classes and dropping out of the same school.

Inappropriate Policies, Implementation and Policies Somersault

Nigeria is a country where many educational policies abound. Since the advent of western education in Nigeria, many educational policies have been formulated and implemented in an attempt to provide thrust for the educational system and achieve its objectives holistically.

The educational system cannot profit from making numerous policies. A lot of contradiction has surfaced from policies formulation and implementation. Among these are: unstable policies – a situation where government in power cancels educational policies even though they are laudable. There is also issue of inappropriate policies as a result of errors in the formulations. Many policies in Nigeria are commendable, but are not implemented due to lack of funds, corruption amongst those in authority and political interference.

Solutions to the Challenges of Educational Planning

Reviving the educational planning system in Nigeria lies partly in the hands of the government. The government at all levels needs to commit to the delivery of a competitive standard of education within an across the country. In view of the role of education in individual's and national development and the identified causes of its low development in Nigeria; it is imperative that effort should be made to combat the challenges of education. Solving the problems of education in Nigeria is however a task for all the education stakeholders but particularly, the parents, educational institutions' administrators, government, students, educational planners and policy makers. To achieve this change, the following majors are recommended:

1. **Adequate Funding of Education:**

Government should allocate more funds to education. It would not be too much if 26 % of the national budget is allocated to the sector in view of the role of education in national development. This will even be a compliance with the UNESCO minimum funding standard

2. **Increase Access to Schools**

In view of the need to increase the access of the citizen to education in Nigeria, in line with its effort to achieve education for the entire citizen in 2015, more primary and secondary schools should be established while enrollment should be maximized in the established schools.

3. Recruitment of Teachers

In view of the roles of teachers in educational process and the present dearth in schools, more teachers should be recruited and posted to schools particular for in the core subjects. Efforts should also be made to improve the quality of teachers in schools. This can be achieved if the deadline for upgrading the qualification of teachers to the minimum standard (i.e. NCE) is extended by another five years. There should also be in-service training of those teachers in stock, to improve their competency. Sponsoring teachers to seminars, workshops and conferences is another way to achieve improved quality of the teachers.

4. Motivation of Teachers

In as much as lack of motivation has been identified as one of the causes of negative attitude of teachers in schools, government should give priority to teachers' welfare. Of recent, Federal government approved Enhanced Salary Package (i.e. 27.5% salary increase) for teachers in Nigeria. Unfortunately, many states are yet to implement this packages. Government at the state levels, thus needs to pay this package to encourage teachers towards improved performance. Teachers in the difficult and rural areas can also be motivated through the payment of additional allowances by the government

5. Curbing corruption

It is not a gain saying that much of the financial resources meant for educational development in Nigeria has been diverted due to corruption. It has thus become imperative for this menace to be eradicated in Nigeria. Government should therefore introduce stern measures aiming at stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria. Erring individuals and government official should be punished to serve as deterrent to others. There should be proper tracking of the resources to the education sector and educational institutions to ensure proper and adequate accountability

6. Curbing Examination Malpractices

Government should strictly enforce the laws against examination malpractice in Nigeria. Those caught in the act, should be punished to serve as deterrent to others. Teachers, being role models to student should however, refrain from being involved in examination malpractices. Parents also owe it a duty to inculcate high level moral training on their children so that they can refrain from examination malpractice in schools.

Conclusions

Education is light to an individual and nation. Its role in this regards makes it imperative for it to be acquired. Successive governments in Nigeria have over the years, been showing the desire to adopt education for its citizens due to its benefits. This is demonstrated through funding and provision of other needed resources as well as institution of policy framework for its growth and development. Certain factors are however, undermining the development of education in Nigeria. In this paper, factors such as insufficient funding, infrastructural decays, teachers, poor planning and

implementation, inappropriate education policies and implementation among others were examined. It thus, needs not be overemphasized that education needs complete turnaround in Nigeria for it to meet global challenges and achieve its goals. Stakeholders need to rise up to the challenges, change the course of events and put education in the right footing, which is the only way to sustainable development. In spite of this challenge, education can develop in Nigeria if they are tackled decisively.

Way Forward

1. Government need to have full and definite control over education.
2. Education planners should be given useful clauses about education requirement to people like semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the cities and vast majority of workers that live in rural areas, so as to improve economic recovery.
3. As planners make plans for educational development, there is a need to put into consideration the capacity of economic stars of personnel, for up to date knowledge and sustainable economic development.
4. Adequate funds should be allocated to education for the plans or blueprint to be carried to the latter. Team of planners should comprise of capable hands from various fields for efficiency and effectiveness of national development.

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