

PLANNING EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND RELIANCE: CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

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Abstract

Education in whatever way it is perceived prepares man to face the challenges of **life**. Countries the world over have used education as a tool for survival. The extent to which education performs this function depends on how carefully it is planned. Hence, countries that use education to achieve their goals and objectives take educational planning very seriously. For a successful educational planning in Nigeria, this paper discusses **some** conditions that must be observed **in** order to achieve economic rehabilitation and reliance.

Introduction

Rehabilitation as defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is "to restore something to its former higher status or position". The same dictionary defines reliance as "the state of being dependent on something". Combining the two definitions, education for economic rehabilitation and reliance will then mean restoring the economy of the nation to its former higher level of performance for the purpose of achieving economic self sufficiency using education as a tool. From this definition, it implies that the economic system of the nation was once better than what it is now. Education in any way it is perceived prepares man to face the challenges of life, it prepares man to solve numerous problems of his time. Perhaps, it is for this reason that Ezeocha (1988) quotes Okafor (1981) that "What makes a man to live and function is the concern of education, therefore education should be of functional value to man". To be of functional value to man according to Cookey (1972) education should be such that will emphasize more the ability to perform productive tasks than the education that aims at producing ideological conformity.

Before 1st October 1960, Nigeria was formerly under the British protectorate and the Britons occupied most of the important positions in the government service including the judiciary. The educational system inherited was good to a considerable extent. It was good for the country and society for which it was planned; good for Britain and the British society. Its relevance to Nigerian needs is questionable because it neglected largely the country's cultural and social background. In the same vein, it failed to produce educated graduates who could help the country in laying the foundations of economic freedom by providing the manual skills and expertise necessary for successful industrial, technological and agricultural development (Ogunsaju, 1982:244).

Education must cater for every aspect of development needs, be it social, cultural, political or economic. As Awokoya (1952) once asserted that "Educational development is imperative and urgent. It must move with the momentum of a revolution". Thus, for developing countries, it is increasingly being appreciated that all aspects of development including education itself hinge largely on economic capacity to mobilize resources for development. For this reason, good educational planning is of prime importance to an emerging nation such as Nigeria. Since educational planning is "the application of rational 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 its learners and of society" (Coombs, 1970:14), there must be conditions for planning the type of education that will meet the yearnings of the vast majority of people in the society.

For Nigeria, this is imperative. Conditions for efficient and effective planning are indispensable if education is to act as a tool for economic rehabilitation and reliance. This paper therefore highlights and discusses some of the most crucial conditions that must be met before a good educational plan that will place Nigeria on the path of economic rehabilitation and reliance can be achieved.

It must be pointed out that among the factors that impale progress in educational ventures is inadequate planning. Inadequate planning is a bane on educational development anywhere but especially in a developing country like Nigeria. A paper like [his, which seeks to identify conditions for effective planning will ensure a realistic planning and consequently an achievable educational programme that would lead to economic rehabilitation and reliance.

Major Conditions for Success in Planning Education for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance.

Most of Nigeria's educational plans in the past had been unsuccessful because of certain constraints; among which are political, financial, statistical and manpower constraints. As a result, most of the plans that contain several elaborate statements of educational priorities desired, failed to fulfill the objectives laid down by the plan. Thus, the transition of educational plan in Nigeria according to Ogunaju (1982) has been one of "growth without development".

Careful Study and Analysis of the Political Situation in the Country

Since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, education had become politicised. Politicians have been using education as a weapon of gaining votes during electioneering campaigns; and they have been promising so much than what they could deliver once elected into the office. Moreover, the political crisis which occurred since independence would have hindered the successful implementation of educational development plans, however carefully they were prepared (Adesina, 1982). It is worth mentioning at this juncture that between 1960 and 1979, Nigerian operated under six different regimes. Each regime had its own ideology which usually had great impact on the planning and development of education in Nigeria. In order to avoid disruption of educational plans as a result of change in government educational planners should study, examine and analyse the political ideology of the government in power before planning. According to Ogunaju (1982) it is this examination and careful analysis of the political situation that would help planners plan within the guidelines of the national planning.

Depoliticization of Education/Technical Knowledge

For effective planning of education, the power of politicians to take irrational decisions without prior consultations with professional advisers and advisory bodies should be seriously considered and the professional advisers should be prepared to discharge their duties with loyalty holding no allegiance to any political party. Accepted that education cannot be completely divorced from politics, political considerations must not be the exclusive basis for the planning and implementation of educational plans if the desired end-results are to be achieved. Unfortunately, in Nigeria political considerations always take precedence over technical ones because most ministers of education in Nigeria had little or no administrative experience of educational institutions. Consequently, a lot of the decisions taken are usually useless since the decisions are virtually politically biased. Thus, it becomes the practice of Nigerian government to dismiss plans that are politically unacceptable in spite of their technical merits or to modify them to achieve the desired political result. A clear example of inclusion of politics in education observes Adesina (1982) was the introduction of Universal Primary education (UPE) in the old Western and Eastern Nigeria, despite serious warnings that too rapid an expansion would affect the financial stability of the two regions. These warnings were ignored and the great adventure yielded a series of terrible shocks.

Adequacy of Skilled Manpower

The process of educational planning involves expertise. It is not a layman's business because of the rigours involved in the training. For this reason, for successful educational plans to be achieved, educational planning should be the business of the experts who are trained for it and they should offer all the technical advice and take the necessary technical decisions their job entails. Sadly enough, most technical decisions taken in Departments of Educational Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) of the country's ministries of education are taken by unqualified staff. To buttress this claim, Olagboye (2004) observed that:

There are few professionally trained educational planners in the country's ministries of education and their parastatal organisations. Most planners in these organizations are non-educational planners who are usually routinely posted to the various departments of planning, research and statistics (PRS) to perform planning duties for which they have not been professionally trained. Even at the institutional level educational plans are implemented, many school heads have no training in educational planning and administration. Most attain their headship positions on the basis of seniority and experience as classroom teachers rather than professional training and cognate experience. Thus, both the planning of education and the implementation of educational plans are in the hands of non-planners from whom it would not be justifiable to expect superior performance (p. 285).

This should not be so. For effective educational planning there must be adequate provision of skilled manpower in the country's ministries of education and they are to offer technical advice on all matters of educational planning.

Adequate Funding/Establishment of a Financial Planning System

Another condition for success of educational planning in Nigeria is that there must be an adequate provision of funds to carry out the planned projects because it will amount to waste of efforts and other human resources if plans are not sufficiently backed by fund. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the educational planners to establish a financial planning system which will indicate the estimated costs of the proposed educational and administrative programme. The financial planning system should also indicate the annual forecasts of capital and operating costs and also identify sources of revenue and predict the amounts to be received by the state government. When the above system is well established the planner should develop evaluating procedures which will enable him to estimate benefits derived from current or proposed programmes and assign high priorities to programmes which contribute most to the goals and objectives of the school system, In addition, the planner should prepare adequate budgets for each year which will help the state to determine how much money should be allocated to education (Ogunsaju, 1982:259). After independence in 1960, Nigeria has been preoccupied with the challenge of development calling for new skills and the right attitudes both socially, culturally, politically and economically. Finance has been one of the most crucial problems hindering the success of Nigeria's educational planning and development. The educational budget is the plan that embodies the financial resources to be expended on the implementation of educational projects, programmes and policies. Consequently, it must be backed with the release of funds required for the procurement of project or programme materials and the payment of personnel and overhead costs. Thus, finance is central to the implementation of educational plans. The importance of finance to successful educational planning led Lewis (1967) to observe, somewhat cynically, that a plan without a large budget surplus will get nowhere; whereas a large budget surplus can work wonders even without a plan".

Appropriate and Judicious use of Education Funds for Programmes they are Meant

In the face of extremely limited resource allocation for the implementation of educational plans, it is of utmost importance that all fund released to education be judiciously and strictly expended on education. This however had not always been the case in Nigeria. As a result of pervasive corruption in the country, there is growing culture of misappropriation and embezzlement of funds meant for educational development at all levels. Thus, reports Olagboye (2004) that some school Heads even divert WACC/NECO examination fees paid by their students into their pockets. Some school heads and their teachers actively collude with their students to perpetrate serious examination malpractices, which make nonsense of the purpose of examination and academic certificates and subvert the education system, (p. 287). Experience has shown that huge sums of money voted for educational programmes are never used for the purpose. Part of such monies are carted away or embezzled by those who have access to them so that what is left for actual implementation of specific programmes becomes too small to achieve meaningful or anticipated results. The situation is not helped by the reluctance or inability of the government to prosecute corrupt educational personnel. In other words, any officer who embezzles or misappropriates programme funds should be apprehended and made not only to pay back the money but also severely punished to deter others who may want to commit same.

Availability of Accurate, Timely and Relevant Statistical Data

For a realistic and constructive planning in Nigeria, there must be good and reliable statistical data. Effective educational planning depends largely on the availability of accurate, timely and relevant data. Data such as these are in short supply in Nigeria where successive population censuses had tended to be unreliable, besides engendering acrimony that threatens to tear the country apart. To illustrate one major statistical problem confronting educational planners in less developing countries including Nigeria, Fredrikson (1982) has remarked that lack of key data and incomplete coverage of existing data are serious obstacles to efficient planning and monitoring of educational systems in developing nations. For example, how can a country's progress towards target such as UPE be assessed if, due to incomplete data we do not know how many children are attending? How can future school enrolment, teacher requirements and costs be projected if one does not know how many already entered school. As a result of lack of reliable statistical data for planning purposes, Adesina (1982) reports that planners devise a crude method of collecting much of their information and using it immediately. One of the devised methods according to Adesina was the use of short questionnaires which are usually sent to school principals and teachers and (the completion of the questionnaire by all are usually not guaranteed. To achieve success in planning education that will achieve economic rehabilitation and reliance educational planners should be aware that planning can hardly be undertaken without relevant statistical data hence, educational

statistics should be developed with planning needs in view. For good educational assessment, data must be gathered on available skill and manpower resources, the existing educational system, the current unused surpluses of labour, numbers and types of inadequately (trained personnel. Data must also be gathered on the emerging as well as existing technologies in industry, commerce, agriculture and education. Data must be gathered as well on the traditional, ideological and religious beliefs of the people which if acted as a barrier must be prevented by skills or modified in the modernization process. Unless this is done, it will be very difficult for educational planners to make accurate prediction thus making it unreliable and undependable.

Recommendations

To achieve the above conditions for efficient and effective educational planning in Nigeria, the following is recommended.

1. Educational programmes must be adequately funded. Such fund must be timely in order to be useful for what it is meant.
2. To eliminate problems associated with inadequate, unreliable and untimely statistical data, education data bank should be developed in advance with planning needs in view. Data must be gathered on available skill and manpower resources, (the existing educational system, the current unused surpluses of labour, numbers and types of inadequately trained personnel among others.
3. Technical knowledge must take precedence over political ones to justify the services of skilled manpower in the educational planning process.
4. There must be political stability to ensure continuity in the implementation of educational plans and programmes.
5. Corruption as one of the problems hindering implementation of educational policies in Nigeria should be tackled and eradicated. Officers who are involved in embezzlement or misappropriation of education fund or any other act of fraud should not only be made to refund such money but also be given appropriate punishment to act as deterrent to others who may want to commit similar offence.

Conclusion

Education as a tool for survival has existed over time. Thus, most developed nations of the world have resorted to education to achieve their national goals and objectives; be it either in the introduction of a new social and political order or in the transformation of their economic system. However, the abilities of these nations to achieve their goals have been hinged on a carefully planned educational system. A good educational system can only be the result of a good educational planning. For Nigeria too, the achievement of the type of educational system that can enhance economic rehabilitation and reliance would depend on a successful educational planning. Thus realizing that inadequate planning is one of the factors that impede progress in educational ventures, this paper-gives necessary conditions for a successful educational planning that will make education achieve economic rehabilitation and reliance.

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