

REPOSITIONING EDUCATION PLANNING IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

For any nation to develop technologically it must make good her education system. The problem bedeviling Nigeria's education system most has been that of inadequate planning and the inability of education to match with the changing needs of the society. The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine the repositioning of education within the context of various aspects of educational planning techniques. The study finds out that in current discourse, planning deals with macro issues, emphasizing what the organization should do. It is concerned with the development of both short and long-range guides that will most optimally use the best available resources in the achievement of stated goals. Consequently recommendation were made to strengthen educational planning and make it more meaningful.

Introduction

No condition on earth is permanent except change itself and any other thing that is kept static soon gets obsolete. It is therefore not out of tune to talk about repositioning planning of education in Nigeria or in any other country of the world for that matter. Education is one of the basic institutions established by society to meet its specific purposes for specific ages, hence with time changes in societal values, interest, attitudes, aspirations and technologies may make the old educational system dysfunctional. Repositioning is the product of structuring and executing objectives in line with changes in contemporary society. It requires redefining aims, working towards well - predicted goals, planning and executing plans accordingly. Repositioning is also the act of refocusing, planning strategically, relocating, networking and formulating policies capable of effecting positive changes in individual, by making them more valid and relevant to the new social order. In today's world, an educational programming is relevant to the extent that its meets the needs of the economy.

Concept of Educational Planning

Education in Nigeria is in Crisis. Quality of teachers is low, so naturally is the quality of what they deliver. The revised National policy on Education (FRN, 2004), states explicitly that success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate financing. Edem (2004), also affirmed that planning is increasingly becoming an important administrative component in education, through which educational purposes are initiated, translated into programmes, and implemented. Effective planning is essential in Nigeria where education has to compete with other sectors for the allocation of funds within limited national resources. Edem (2004), also stated that dissipated effort, wasted resources, and poor results often accompany poor planning.

Adesina (1981), defines education planning as a process of applying scientific or rational procedures to the process of educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system. This implies that in this process; several steps would be taken sometimes one after the other. The planning activities aimed at the fulfillment of the goals of educational enterprise.

According to National policy on education (2004), administration is a function of organization and structure, proprietorship and control, inspection and supervision. Nnabuo (1999), gave elaborate concept of education planning which suit our purpose in this paper. According to him, educational planning is the frame of reference and the point of departure of the interdisciplinary approach in education. A cohesive force that coordinates and directs the many different components of an education system and ensures that widely accepted long-term goals such as Universal Basic Education (UBE) are approached more objectively. It implies a realistic appraisal of the country's financial means, its human resources and institutional structures and other factors bearing upon the success of an education plan. An instrument to channel all knowledge about education and related disciplines into the preparation and implementation of long - term and short -term educational development plans. This seems to suggest that education planning is a process which

attempt to ensure that the production of education is not only efficient but that it involves minimum costs.

Aghenta (1993), in Olubor (2004), observed that there are two types of education planning in vogue in many parts of the world, namely: strategic and operational planning.

Strategic planning, deals with macro issues emphasizing what the organization should do. It focuses on the educational system and its environment as consisting of many subsystems interacting between themselves and the environment, the main features being goals and strategies, size, structure, ownership, information and decision process of educational system and its sub - system. In other words, strategic planning enables the leaders of an institution, both academic and administrative, to examine the position of the institution in the context of its mission statement, and analyses the essential aspect of the institution's endeavors, and make realistic future projections of its financial, academic and physical needs.

Specifically, the analysis is done in terms of four variables- Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Strategic planning operation at three levels - a short term, medium term and long term planning. Agabi (1998), explained that there is no rigidity in time duration between them. However, it is generally recognized that short term focus on the plans for the year and strategies for dealing with problems that may arise in the immediate future (Ngara, 1995).

Medium and long term planning activities are recognized as falling between five and ten years respectively and involves the development of integrated mechanisms for a periodic review of programmes and operating strategies. Thus, strategic planning is about vision and proactive management as opposed to the reactive style that has bedeviled management thinking in this country.

Operational planning focuses on the present resources and operational problems to ensure that the goals is attained. It is any planning carried out at the local or the institutional level. It is concerned with measurable and verifiable objectives (Olubor, 2004). Strategic and operational plans are complementary; for instance while strategic planning ensures that the right thing is done, operational planning is to ensure that the system is doing things right.

The implication of this is that at the institutional level, planning should be targeted at procurement, analysis and interpretation of data aimed at coordinating of institutional programmes, budget allocations and implementation of the master plan. Olubor (2004), remarked that such plans should take any of the following forms:

- > Adaptive Educational planning: This is a plan undertaken principally because of externally induced development. That is plans made to adapt to the new condition.
- > Contingency Educational Planning: This is an approach aimed at creating conditions whose effect can be adsorbed at minimum cost of inconvenience.
- > Manipulative Education planning: when a situation develops a plan relying on various types of instruments is effected to gain an advantage of the situation. For instance, if revenue suddenly decrease, due to market forces, various means of production should be devised to save the educational situation.

School Management

An organization is as effective as its management. There are modern management techniques that could be used in managing the education enterprise. Some of these techniques have gained wide acceptance in developed countries and have ensured better performance of the various systems of education. Agabi (1998) argued that management techniques are systematic procedure of investigating, planning or control, which can be applied to management programme. Among such techniques that can be applied for repositioning of education in Nigeria are:

- > Planning Programme and Budgeting system (PPBS) for financial planning. In PPBS, the educational organizational weighs and analysis the various means by which its objectives can be achieved, and an optimum choice among competing alternatives (Mbipon, 2000).
- > Cost-Benefit and cost-Effectiveness Analysis for executive of projects, and
- > Management of Objectives (MBO) for personnel management. Everybody needs training and retraining. The education system will be given more vigor if its established various in-service training for various categories of teachers and educational administrators so that they can be continually renewed by new knowledge.

Strategies for Re-positioning Educational Goals and Administrative Structure

The rationale for repositioning of educational goals and administrative structure hinges on the need to make the system truly relevant to the changing needs of the contemporary Nigerian society. Ndu (1998), observed that educational goals of the nation as enunciated in the national policy is adequate but that there is a near total commitment to the provision of Nursery and Kindergarten education. This level of education is very significant in the system as it sets the stage for actual schoolwork. Children learn not only the basic language and numeracy skill, but the develop attitude of cooperation and living with nature. Thus, there is need for repositioning the administrative structure such that every school starts with the kindergarten section with qualified teachers and appropriate ancillary staff provided.

Financial Planning For Secondary Schools

Repositioning financial planning for secondary is conceived as an important component of state secondary schools long range planning (Nduka, 2001). Boarding speaking, the purpose of such plan should be:

- > To protect the secondary schools from unnecessary and harmful dislocations and fluctuation in programmes and services to the students. Such fluctuations may arise from resource surplus or shortages.
- > To build public and staff confidence in the state Ministry of Education by giving assurance that careful planning process is in place and that the decision makers of the state secondary schools are not bouncing and bobbing from one decision, to another with a focus.

The Voucher Option

Nnabuo (1999), defined voucher as a piece of paper, which confirms that a sum of money has been paid on behalf of the recipient to a specified institution. Essentially, the intent of funding educational system through voucher option is to increase the power of household in making educational choices for its children. This idea is that parents and students are best judges of the kind of education in an open market where they have a choice among schools. The voucher method would make educational institution competitive in term of efficiency and effectiveness. There will be tendency for each school to improve its performance as parents and students cash in their voucher in school that meet certain criteria. The voucher will not only allows for the guarantee of open admission to qualified students, but will eliminate the monopoly of material and non-material resources which most schools enjoys at the expense of other.

Components of State Secondary Schools' Long-Range Plan

Nduka (2001) and Macson (2007) submit that secondary schools' long-range plan should contain the following:

- > Student Enrolment Projection: Without a reliable enrolment projection by class and school for up to six-twelve years ahead, updated annually, a school administrator cannot plan relationally the number of teachers and other staff needed, the number of classroom and schools to be caught on double session without enough students or caught with excess space without students.
- > An instructional Programme Development:- To bring about a change in education takes a long-term curriculum redesign projects should be done on long-time basis.
- > A Staff Development Plan:- The Primary function of any school is learning, and teaching is still the duty of teachers, with a high probability that it will continue to be so. We need skilled engineers to design and install new and improved equipment and technically skilled personnel to plan and manager production, to maintain experience and perhaps automatic equipment, to sell and service the product (Macson 2007). This means, among other things that planning should focus on development and utilization of our human resources.

Repositioning educational planning for national development requires that objectives of academic programme should state clearly what the graduates of the programme will be able to do or contribute to the economy when they go out there. The scope of planning a development oriented

educational system should be comprehensive. That is, it should cooperate both academic and the vocational dimensions.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. Efficient planning of education sector should be built on sound decision and decision-making process.
2. Educational planner should use the most up to date techniques in management by objective (MBO) in case of personnel management, planning, programming budgeting system (PPBS) for financial planning and cost benefit and cost effectiveness analysis for project execution.
3. Education system should be brought on course through proper funding (voucher option) and autonomy, not guided autonomy which is counter productive.

Conclusions

This paper presents strategies for repositioning of educational planning in Nigeria. It takes a stand that strategic planning is the heart of any educational system.

The paper is of the view that it is the logical and systematic process by which management of the organization reaches a decision on the major strategic direction of the business. Major recommendations were made to strengthen educational planning and make it more meaningful.

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