

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS OF PLANNING EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper focuses attention on the administrative issues and problems of planning education in Nigeria, with special reference to the planners themselves, that is the Federal Government and state administrators. One of the major problems is that all too often, recommendations don't come from school administrators, teachers and other school personnel. This, no doubt may have constituted problems in planning and implementation of education in Nigeria and equally led to the failure of most of the formulated educational policies. The status quo of administrative planning of education in Nigeria should be revisited considering its developmental nature against our youths who are the future of the country. For effective administrative planning the country 's economy should be looked into and considered before schools in Nigeria start production of graduates into the labour market, to avoid producing more number of graduates the economy can carry.

Introduction

The three major tiers of Nigeria's educational system, primary, secondary and tertiary tiers, are uniform, respectively, nationwide, despite minor local variations. Pupils and students are

expected to reach the same level of development by the time they graduate from any of the tiers of education.

The Federal Government of Nigeria plays a co-ordinating role with particular regards administratively to broad direction of educational policies and planning at all levels of education. In other words, the essence of education is to plan and administratively integrate the young ones into the norms of their own society. In this regard, every society has some basic needs, one of which is production of individuals who can integrate into the norms of the society and thus help develop the society. Therefore, planning in education is the process of forecasting the type of education, the content of the education, and the process and procedures to be adopted, and administratively implemented in order to use education achieve the pre-stated objectives of the society.

At this period of global economic mell-down, resulting in severe economic depression and inflation, Nigeria cannot afford to waste her resources in terms of human or material. If education is not planned and administratively implemented, there may be tendency of either over production or under production of human resources in different sectors of the economy, or on the other hand it may lead to financial problem on either over expenditure or under expenditure. To minimize this wastage therefore, there is need to plan for effective administration in educational system.

Administrative implementation simply refers to the process of performing a task on activity or objective. It is the fulfillment of ones intent or purpose. It is the stage when the preparations made earlier, the plans, designs and analyses proposed are tested and effectively administered to see how real they reflect. It is also the stage where the policy content and the impact factor on people could be substantially altered or even negated by the political and administrative process. In Nigeria, planning and implementation of educational activities are, generally the functions of administrative bodies such as National Universities Commission (NUC), Ministry of Education, etc. Some of the functions have been found to be carried out incompletely and ineffectively. Several factors in Nigeria are responsible for ineffective planning and implementations of educational objectives.

Education

Education as the functional significant of people's ability to read and write has made literacy one of the fundamental requirements of modern civilization. In fact, contemporary scholars have posited a threshold of sixty percent literacy level among citizens as a necessary requirement for a sustainable national economic growth. No less stressed in this regard were the socio-political benefits of literacy which were portrayed as pre-conditions for effective working of political democracy regardless of ideological differences.

According to Ozigi (1979), education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive and sometimes negative values in the society in which that individual lives. The idea of acquiring knowledge through informal training, transmission of what is worthwhile to people could equip them for future positive actions. Such active participation could improve the life of the community generally. Education is also the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all the individuals within it, so that they can take part in their personal and national development. Okafor (1984) defined education also as a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities, and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reasons and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment.

Planning

Planning is the backbone of every aspect of life. Agabi (in Peretomode, 1995; p 56) defined planning as “the process of determining in advance, what is to be done, including classification of goals, establishment of policies, mapping out of programmes and campaigns and determining specific methods or procedures and fixing day to day schedules”. Effective planning could be realized through administrative initiations and implementation of programmes. It could equally be as a prepared set of decisions for future actions directed at achieving goals through optimal means. Such means could involve activities foretelling the future and preparing for them.

Educational Planning

Bosah (in Uwazurike, 1991) stated that educational planning is the “process of preparing a set of decisions for future action pertaining to education”. According to him, it is the application of 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 its students and society.

Eze (1983) expressed his view on educational planning as the application to education itself of rational scientific analysis to examining one’s alternatives, choosing wisely among them, then proceeding systematically to implement the process made. Educational planning according to Fayol (in Edem, 1982) described it as the activities involved in foretelling the future and preparing for them.

Purposes of Educational Planning

Educational planning helps decision makers at all levels to reach a better and well informed decision. This is because, through educational planning adequate data are collected on the particular level that is supposed to be planned for and on basis of the availability of such information.

Therefore, educational planning helps to promote speedy and effective administration. Also, with educational planning it becomes easy to evaluate the progress made in the educational system.

Types of Educational Planning

Agabi (in Peretomode, 1995) stated that there are various types of educational planning, that depends on the classificatory approach adopted. Most popular approaches according to him include those by time horizon, scope, time dynamism, level of government involvement, manager level, etc.

Using time horizon classification, educational planning can either be a short term, medium term or long term planning. It is generally recognized that the implementation of short term planning does not go beyond one fiscal year medium term planning activities and recognized as falling between two to five or even ten years according to Agabi (1995). Educational planning of a long term perspective falls between ten and twenty five years or even beyond, he said.

There are two levels of educational planning based on the scope of the plan. These, according to Agabi (1995) are micro-level planning and macro-level planning. Micro-level planning is any planning activity that is carried out at the local government or the institutional level, while macro-level planning on the other hand, involves policy making and broad target setting at the state, regional, national or even international level.

Education and Economic Planning

Planning in education is very important in that it helps to determine the extent to which the local and national economy can carry the system of education. It is through planning that the extent to which the policy on education can be implemented. It is a system through which educational policy or system of education can be cut to the size of the nation's economy.

Basic Principles of Educational Planning

For, solution to the above hindrances and achievement of fundamental objectives of planning education, Agabi (in Peretomode, 1995) suggested that the following principles should be adopted: the principle of participatory planning, principle of integration, principle of specialization and principle of administrative harmonization.

- For the principle of participatory planning, it demands that the educational planning process must involve adequate participation of interest groups.
- The principle of integration, this requires that educational planning process should be properly integrated with the overall national development plan.
- The principle of specialization demands that educational planning is a specialized task and should therefore be handled by those with training competence to do so.
- Finally, the principle of administrative harmonization is very central to the successful implementation of well formulated education plan.

Approaches to Educational Planning

Educational planning is essentially an exercise in decision making, based on this, three basic approaches have been developed to guide on what type of education to be provided for a given society, these include: the social demand approach, manpower requirement approach and cost-benefit approach.

- The social demand approach has been described as regarding education as a birth right of every citizen.
- The manpower requirement approach recognizes only areas of shortage of manpower in the economy and plans to train and provide such required skilled manpower.
- The cost benefit approach holds the view that, for an individual or government to be able to make a wise decision concerning investment, it must calculate the cost of such a project and the benefits to be derived from it.

Merits of the Approaches

The implementation of social demand increases the level of literacy and enhances the achievement of quality of educational opportunities. The manpower reduces the level of educated unemployables. The cost benefits provide information about the links between education, the labour market and the economic consequences of alternative policies.

Demerits of the three Approaches

Social demand is insensitive to the usual resource constraints for providing high quality and a variety of education, a typical example is the case of UBE to a large segment of the population such as manpower approach that completely ignores other levels or types of education that are not involved in the training of job specific skills. The cost benefit is more interested in the investment aspects of education as against the consumption aspect.

Stages in Educational Planning

1. Planning Process: According to Uwazurike and Ozuzu (1995), the normal and expected phases in the Nigeria educational planning are as follows:

- The pre-independence period
- The Ashby report and the launching of the first National Development Plan which ended in January, 1970.
- The second National Development Plan of 1970 – 1974.
- The third National Development Plan of 1975 – 1980.

Meanwhile, the above process led to introduction of Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) in 1976 and later 6-3-3-4 system of education.

2. Policy Evolution: Education policies are evolved and formulated in every community in order to improve the standard of living of the such community. For example, the establishment of Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) in some states in Nigeria is to alleviate the problems of indigent students and parents in this hard time.

The New National Policies on education was also evolved after a long drawn seminars and conferences on the relevance of the previous educational system in the realization of the developmental dreams of Nigeria.

3. Formulation of Policy: Human needs problems were identified for solution to existing problems contributed to policy formulation and implementation by educational administrators at various units of government, ministries, departments and parastatals. They raise issues of importance concerning education in the conferences and workshops organized for them by their employers. They brought their knowledge, expertise and experiences in the development of courses of action. They also helped in modification of the existing laws.

4. Data Collection: According to Adeyemi (in Uwazurike, 1995) qualitative and quantitative data are desirable in educational process. Such data form the basis for making well- informed decisions on the quantity, quality and variety of materials, resources in-put, etc and the need to effectively kick-start and sustain a programme. For example, before free education policy can be implemented, there has to be information as regard the existing resources situation, enrolment, manpower, facilities, finance etc, so as to detect the area of inadequacy.

Problems of Planning Education

1. Improper Policy

Educational policies in Nigeria are more or less dictated even to the planners themselves. On the other hand, the ministries of education at the Federal and State levels hardly involves school administrators, teachers and other school personnel in the planning of policies. So, the implementation of educational policies is always problematic.

Over the years, the various Nigerian governments have administered the schools in terms of policy making, financing and staffing, we need no soothsayer to tell us that the issues on administrative problems of disciplines in educational sectors have always hinged on some points. Nigerians, like the government have refused to follow the right means to apply the natural ways of curing or preventing the 'problematic educational planning'.

It should be a cardinal educational objective to develop an appropriate discipline right from the early youths school days. Effective educational planning is not easy to achieve in view of the complexity of the phenomenon. In this respect, Anambra State Government (in Bontroux, 1981), a French Philosopher who says that the task of the educator is a strange one for he has to act on the mind and conscience in such a way as to render them capable of thinking and judging of themselves to determine initiative, arouse spontaneity, and fashion human beings into freedom.

Teacher-pupil participation will be on a much more equal partnership with the Nigerian Government. This will contribute to the government's achievements of good implementation of Educational goals. Here the government planning with the teacher what they will try to do, that is **objective formulation**; how they will go about it, that is **methodology** and how they will measure their success or achievement, that is **evaluation**. This will further make both the teacher and students become deeply involved in their own learning for the future of the country, Nigeria.

According to Wheeler (1967), one important point gathered from review of literature and from research is that in initial stages of planning, the teacher's effort is much greater, but that with practice and time, teacher-pupils planning will be on a much more equal partnership.

For educational planning to be effectively achieved, it requires the cooperative effort of the parents, the government and entire youths. There is an adage that says charity begins at home so does discipline. If a youth comes from a broken home or a home infested by pugnacity and disorder, he is already educated in acts of indiscipline and planlessness. If the government does not play her constitutional role in an educational system of the country vis-à-vis by not paying the teachers, retrenching the educationally trained manpower; laying off the school guards at the gate, and not providing the necessary facilities in the schools that make for effective discipline in educational system, then why must planlessness and indiscipline in educational sector not take hold of such a school system. If a major proportion of education staff is made up of untrained officers because they are indigenes of the area of the state, what do we expect? Where the staff or officers are drunks, sex maniacs, drug addicts and talkative, certainly their products like educational planning cannot be different from what they are.

2. Nigerian Practical Aspect

With reference to Nigerian government economy and education sector, we should never forget that poor educational planning results to poor economy. The world economy has since become knowledge-based. Do we think Nigerian economy can improve without education? When two elephants fight the grasses suffer. This is in reference to Nigerian Government and her Educational Sector, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

It is very unfortunate and obnoxious that the most valuable asset to the players of the world economy has no value in Nigeria. Teachers are treated like lepers while the products of their endeavours, the so called leaders or rulers swim in vast ocean of wealth and affluence as their children are all abroad or at costly private universities in Nigeria.

Nigerian leaders should not fail to consider the impending doom in abandoning the youths of this country to enforced idleness. She should not ignore the consequences of educational staff on our polity and integrity. Nigerian government should not nurture crime among their teeming youths. She should not wake up from her slumber only when her youths must have invented crimes of higher dimensions other than militant groups, kidnapping and hostage taking. All these problems emanates from improper planning and administration of our educational system.

3. Poor Funding

Britain increased her funding for education and research by thirty percent a few years back for the progress of her country and her youths. Yes! If we say education is expensive should we try ignorance? Militant-groups in Nigeria who terrorize every where and kidnap big and small human being, as an example. It then means Nigerian Government as a result of failure in educational planning and administration is today accepting ignorance as a better alternative to improving salary structures and other conditions of service of staff in tertiary institutions in her country.

This trend constitutes problems in planning and implementation of education in Nigeria, and this problem led to the failure of most of the educational policies formulated. For example, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the educational 6-3-3-4 system in Nigeria.

For the solution of this problem of educational planning in Nigeria, education in the Nigerian's yearly budget should be made the highest or be increased. But if contrary is the case, why do Nigeria always sing the song of joining the big league of the world like rebranding the economy while we look the other way when our children do not go to school or go without contribution?

4. Unemployed Youths

In most developing countries including Nigeria, people see education or school as an end itself and not a means to an end. This means that people see education as the quickest way of securing employment and the only escape route away from the village life to urban environment. As a result of planlessness and unco-ordinated administrative activities between the government, schools of all levels and the labour market, these schools tend to train the wrong caliber of individual for the labour force. This notwithstanding, it may be disheartening to note that the carrying capacity of the economy of the country is usually not fully considered before the schools start to produce graduates into the labour market. This explains why, over the years, more graduates are produce than the economy can carry with the result that there are many unemployed educated ones roaming about the streets.

Administration

The field of Educational Administration in Nigeria is a realm of study and almost as old as education. The word "administration" may be associated with the running of the family, educational institutions, health institutions, etc. Administration according to Ukeje (1992: p 71) is "the activity that maintains an organization and concerns itself with the directions of the activities of people working within the organization in their reciprocal relations to the end that the organizations purposes may be attained". Adebayo (1992) in his view, sees administration as the organization and direction of persons in order to accomplish a specific end, also when two men cooperate to tell a stone that neither could work alone, the rudiments of administration have appeared.

In other words, Educational Administration according to Agwara (2004) is the process that is concerned with the using of principles, methods and practices to establish, develop and execute the goals, polices, plans and procedures, necessary to achieve the objectives of education. All these however imply usage of human and material resources in a manner that would enable educational objective to be achieved.

The administrator who makes the decision may be the Head, or Co-ordinator or Supervisor. Such an individual has certain assumptions for himself, the office and others. He has certain benefits according to Eresimadu (1987), for himself, his school or organization with values which influence him. He also possesses some personal idiosyncrasies which were developed probably during socialization, process in childhood days or during growth in the organization. These constitute forces within the individual which influence the extent to the kind of administrative decision he makes.

Problems of Administration

As regards to administrative problems in educational planning, staff, students and principals' indiscipline behaviour are major points to mention. The staff, students and the school administrators or principals deviate from the educational accepted mode of conduct, like deliberate defiance of authority, anti-social acts, immorality, negligence of duty by staff and students; maladministration, lack of proper communication, lack of trust in staff, lack of appreciation of the opinions and contributions of staff and students by the school administrators or principles. Such indiscipline, according to Ezegebe (1995), denotes some form of disorder which arises from a negation of the established rules, regulations, laid down procedures and patterns of normal behaviour in the conduct of human activities. All these at the end, affect the educational planning and administration in Nigeria.

Conclusion

In order to effectively tackle the complex problems of planning education in Nigeria administratively, an integrated approach must be adopted in planning and development. The task is not for teachers alone, including learners at tertiary level. All classes of people and professionals in all works of life must join hands to build the country and contribute to its educational development.

Irrespective of religious and ethnic learning, as a nation, should believe and practice certain codes of behaviour. It sounds funny for educators, politicians, youths etc to eulogies social justice, moral integrity, sanctity of life, as the precepts of social contract, only to default in them when faced situations demanding moral decisions.

Recommendation

In this paper, based on field experiences and research findings on problems of planning education in Nigeria, a number of recommendations were made to address such problems through the use of a well established education data bank, at all levels of government. This will avoid the traditional practice of educational planning and implementation without data and genuine commitment by all concerned in education business towards the planning and implementation of education policies. The professionally trained educational planners and administrators equipped with modern techniques of educational management and accountability should be in-charge of planning education in Nigeria. The following are recommended:

- Nigerians must be committed to her educational planning and administration on certain ways of life of her people and be seen to practice same both in body politic and in societies. No amount of lip-service to the proclaimed ideals of 1984 War Against Indiscipline (WAI) will convince the nation of her sincerity without her positive examples.
- The researcher here appeals to Nigerian leaders in public life to live up the expectations of making education planning and administration effective and urge her to use all the

resources of the government to effect social reform in her educational planning system as a whole and stop feigning the economic and social redeemers, as this has become the stock-in-trade slogan in this country.

- Nigerians as professionals in the field must equally recognize their potentials to effect change and reform. It is almost becoming conventional that whenever there is a national crisis like Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and “no work no pay” syndrome, the schools not only get the blame .but invariably the nation turns round to it for the solution of the same problems. Schools are compelled today to assume greater responsibility for social reform and hence the constant call by almost every government for a change in curriculum planning content of schools “to suit their needs and aspirations”. Therefore, teachers and government must accept a good measure of responsibility for the economic growth in Nigeria.
- The Nigerian government should allow the spirit of unity and discipline to reign in schools planning and administration by owning up and fulfilling all her statutory professional obligations to the teachers by way of paying their enhanced salaries promptly, providing teaching and learning equipment, providing the infrastructures etc. It is the opinion of the researcher that it is a serious mark of uncooperativeness and indiscipline on the part of government if she fails in this primary obligation to her subjects.
- The funds needed for the implementation of plans and programmes for education and training must be regarded as an essential pre-investment for the general development of the country.

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