



Educational Planning in Nigeria: Problems and the Ways Forward

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Abstract

Educational planning is key to the realization of education objectives in Nigeria. Educational planning is facing many problems in Nigeria. This article discussed the problems facing planning of education in Nigeria. The article identified: inadequate funding of educational planning, inadequate educational planners, lack of data/information, shortage of planning materials, political influence, political instability and poor capacity development of educational planners as challenges facing planning of education in Nigeria. To address the challenges facing planning of education in Nigeria, the following were suggested: increment in the funding of educational planning, generation of current data, provision of adequate planning materials, employment of more professional planner, policy continuity and ensuring constant training and retraining programme for educational planners.

Keywords: Education, Planning, Problems, Educational planners

1.0 Introduction

The responsibility for administering the education sector in Nigeria is shared among the federal, state and local governments. Thus, in the country's constitution, education is on the concurrent list, but the Federal Government is empowered to regulate all its sectors, engage in policy formation and ensure quality control. Also, the provisions of the constitution allow each tier of government to focus its responsibilities mainly on a sector of education. The Federal Government is involved directly in tertiary education. The states take care of secondary education, while the local governments handle primary education. Despite this arrangement, the Federal Government is expected to support the state and local governments in counterpart funding to enhance the quality of education in the country (NEEDS 2014).

The administration of the education system is shared mainly among the education ministries at the federal and state levels, as well as statutory bodies referred to as commissions. There are commissions established for different subsectors of the education system and are charged with various responsibilities for the subsectors. The FME is responsible for the coherence of the national policy and procedures and for ensuring that the states' policies operate within the parameters of the national policy as adapted for local needs (Moja, 2000). Coordination of policy at the political level is handled by the National Council of Education, the highest policymaking body chaired by the Federal Minister of Education and includes all the State Commissioners of Education. This body is advised by the Joint Consultative Committee on Education, which consists of all the Federal and State Directors of Education, Chief Executives of education statutory bodies, and Directors of University Institutes of Education (NEEDS, 2014).

The state-level education ministries are responsible for the development and implementation of educational policies, management and supervision of educational institutions in their respective states. Specifically, the responsibilities for maintaining all public elementary and secondary schools are vested in the education ministry. Such responsibilities include: determining the salaries of teachers; recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of staff; and provision of guidelines on the establishment of new schools and training and re-training of teaching and non-teaching staff. The oversight functions of the Ministry of Education are carried out through a number of agencies. For instance, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is responsible for the management of basic education, while the Teaching Service Commission takes charge of senior secondary education at the state level (NEEDS, 2014). Higher education in Nigeria is under the supervision of commissions set up by law and which operate as parastatals of the FME. For instance, universities are supervised by the NUC, while colleges of education are supervised by the NCCE. The NBTE oversees polytechnic education. These commissions are responsible for policy decisions affecting institutions under their supervision, maintenance of standards through a system of periodic accreditation of courses, distribution and monitoring of government funding, appointment of members of governing councils, and the day-to-day running of the institutions (NEEDS, 2014).

The Nigerian educational system is full of many challenges which ranges from underfunding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate teachers, overcrowding of classes, weak supervision, weak leadership, corruption, insecurity, unstable educational policies political influence and lack of effective planning. Otiye (2017) observed that the challenge is that since return to civil rule in 1999, there has been a lot of sporadic and ad hoc planning without adherence to long term planning. In addition, there is no systematic planning framework for the country that ensures that adequate data and research, good information system, monitoring and evaluation and tracking of results. The end result is abandonment of projects, poor plan implementation and poor service delivery. Many researchers have identified poor planning of education as a major factor among other factors responsible for the challenges. Thompson (2002) is of the opinion that whatever educational institutions have contributed to development, integrated planning and careful discussion have been found. Thus, for a programme to succeed there must be well worked out and carefully elaborated plan. Thompson (1981) and Mgbekem, Ntukidem, Etor (2004) agreed that the Nigerian educational system has often been criticized for poor planning inherited from colonial masters. It has been condemned for being unable to meet the needs and aspirations of the country as a result of its non-functionality, irrelevant curriculum, relatedness of the learning experiences etc. (Ozigi & Canhan, 1979, Mgbekem, Ntukidem, Etor, 2004). Based on this submission, this article aimed to examine the problems facing the planning of education in Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Educational Planning

Noun (2009) defined educational planning as involving a consideration of unforeseen obstacles and making provision for possible ways of overcoming them. This implies that educational planning calls for a constant evaluation and modification. If necessary of the related programs until the anticipated goals are achieved. For example, if you plan to operate a Nursery and Primary School, it is your duty to get it started, and until pupils start graduating from the school, and the school continue to sustain itself and achieve its goals, the process of planning, implementing and evaluation will continue. Longe (2003) defined educational planning as "involves taking of decisions for future action with the view to achieving predetermined objectives through optimum use of scarce resources" Olaniyonu,

Adekoya and Gbenu (2004) citing Coombs (1970) see educational planning as "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 of the students and the society". Noun (2009) educational planning focuses on the needs, aspirations and prospects of the students and the society. Specifically educational planning focuses the mind of educational planner or Administrator on major issues such as those related to the type of Schools required in the society, the level of education that needs to be given priority, courses to be offered, student enrolment and other issues on human, material and financial resources of the educational system.

2.4 Educational Planning Process in Nigeria

There are different processes of planning education in different countries across the world. In Nigeria, According to Noun (2009) educational planning in Nigeria is undertaken as a part of the overall national planning. This implies that the planning units in the Ministries of Education are expected to work closely with the Ministry of National Planning that is charged with the responsibility of producing overall economic development plans for the country. Therefore educational planning in Nigeria is done within the framework of the national goals. As a result, the process of educational planning in the country starts with the formulation of national policies and goals. Such policies that are related to education are initiated by the policy makers or the ruling political body, often in line with the ideology of the government in power. For instance the President, or a State House of Assembly might decide, as a matter of policy, that agricultural education should be given priority in the country or a given state respectively.

Directives related to such policies are handed down to the Federal (or State) Ministry of Education for necessary action. The officials in the Ministry of Education then examine such policies and restructure them so that they can constitute operational objectives within the context of education. Plans are programs that could help to attain these policies are then worked out essentially in the planning units of the Ministries of Education. The implications of such plans in terms of the required resources for their implementation are also stated. The proposals drawn up in the Ministry of Education are then sent back to the appropriate body such as the National or the State's Executive Council for their consideration and approval. This means that the plans are finally approved by the government and an appropriate legislation is passed on them in terms of edicts or decrees (Noun, 2009).

Once the educational plan is approved by government, the Ministry of Education is confronted with the task of implementation. With long-term plans for instance, the ten-year development plan progress reports are often given periodically. Such reports are expected to reflect the extent to which the targets of the plan have been attained. The Ministries of Education in the States develop their educational plans as is done in the Federal Ministry of Education. It is then expected that educational planning in the States will reflect the overall national goals and objectives of education. It is for this reason that the Federal Ministry of Education sometime coordinates the educational plans of the States to arrive at the National Educational Plans (Noun, 2009).

2.5 Purpose of Educational Planning

Noun (2012) cited Aghenta (1993) who broadly put them as two, they are to:

- (i) Ensure that the educational system is effectively and efficiently planned and operated.
- (ii) Ensure that education serves the needs and aspirations of the society in general and the students in particular. Noun (2012) specifically, listed the following as the reasons for education planning:

(a) Educational planning enables the education managers gain economic insights in the use of resources, which are in most cases limited, educational planning ensures rational allocation of resources to various education programs, projects and among the levels of education.

(b) Because educational planning processes data and information on education through in-depth analysis, it ensures rational and adequate facilities and equipment provision and distribution in the educational institution.

(c) Education is planned to ensure internal efficiency of the school system. That is, to reduce or eliminate wastage in the system.

(d) Educational planning ensures the harmonization of the interests of the various stakeholders in education business. That is, the interests of the students, parents and the society.

(e) Education planning gives direction to actions and facilitates the control of education resources, and provides basis for monitoring and evaluation of the standards, benchmarks and guidelines.

(f) Educational planning integrates various knowledge areas, such as mathematics, statistics, computer science, economics, sociology etc to operationalize the planning of education.

(g) Education is planned to ensure relevance to societal values and aspirations.

3.0 Problems Facing Planning of Education in Nigeria

The planning of education in Nigeria is facing the following problems and these problems include; inadequate funding for planning, inadequate educational planners, lack of data/information, and lack of planning materials, political influence, political instability and poor capacity development of educational planners

3.1 Inadequate Funding for Planning

Inadequate funding of educational planning is a major problem affecting planning of education in Nigeria. Ololube, (2013) submitted that the budgetary allocations that are available for educational planning in Nigeria is nothing to write home about. Funds provide for education planning is too small for proper planning to take place. The condition of the sector remains a thing of concern. Underfunding and systemic corruption makes the matter worse. The insufficient funding of the education planning sector stands as one of the major factors working against effective planning and implementation of education programs. Noun (2009) remarked that another related problem that is encountered in the process of educational planning in Nigeria is that of economic constraints. Adequate allocation of resources is necessary for a successful implementation of educational programme. However, due to political consideration and the high rate of inflation educational programme in the country have tended to be unrealistic in relation to available resources. The planner tends to underestimate the cost of such programme and continues to overestimate the anticipated revenue with which to execute the plans. This situation had been worsened by the worldwide economic recession. There is also an over reliance on foreign aids and in Nigeria, like many African countries, usually anticipated help from foreign donors to finance some of her development projects including those in education. The problem arises when the anticipated money does not come which automatically means that the programs planned cannot be carried out.

3.2 Inadequate Educational Planner

Inadequate professional educational planners in Nigeria is another big challenge facing planning of education in Nigeria. Noun (2009) submitted that lack of sufficiently well trained personnel in the planning units of the Ministries of Education is another problem. This units require people with the ability to carry out project development in the educational service. So as to realize the goals set by the planners. The units in the Ministries therefore lack specialist such as educational planners, statisticians, programmers, and analyst, who could effectively develop and ensure successful execution of plans.

This is partly as a result of the rigidity of the educational system which is not responding adequately to the need to place people who are trained in the area of educational planning in the appropriate position. The wrong notion that anyone who has served in the Ministry of Education for a long period could automatically occupy such planning units in the Ministries having their directors of planning as people who just rose through the ranks without any cognate experience in the skill of planning. In addition, the few available specialists who are employed in the planning divisions of education sometimes opt for the private sector as a result of the poor conditions of service offered in the Ministry. Ololube, (2013) observed that most educational planners in Nigerian do not have complete competence in planning. Qualified planners are the single most significant resource that can lead to greater and efficient planning productivity as performance. In planning, what is needed is the effective utilization resources by connecting the totality knowledge, skills and talents to achieve planning objectives. The quality of planners should not be nothing less than the basic acceptable standards worldwide.

3.3 Lack of Data/information to Plan

Lack of current data on educational institutions in Nigeria is another problem preventing effecting planning of education in Nigeria. Ololube, (2013) opined that one of the most difficult challenges that educational planners face is the issues of inaccurate statistical data. The quality of technical planning is in most cases inhibited by statistical deficiencies and inaccurate data. Nigerian education systems has failed to effectively plan because of lack of accurate data, which is because of the use of mediocre to prepare data for use in the planning and forecasting processes. Noun (2009) disclosed that the process of educational planning in Nigeria is also hampered by the critical problem of inadequate statistical and demographic data. For any meaningful planning to be carried out, statistics is very crucial. However so reliable census has been conducted in country. The census conducted during the pre-independence era, for instance in 1931 and 1952 were confronted with the problem of insufficient funds and lack of trained personnel for any meaningful exercise. There was also the fear of the government using such census for the purpose of taxation with the result that majority of the people did not cooperate with the officials for any reliable population figure to be attained. NEEDS (2014) submit the challenging of obtaining data with current statistics for the assessment mainly due to the fact that current data on the education sector was generally not available in the public domain? The assessment therefore relied on available data, some of which was more than three years old and had not been updated at the time of the study.

3.4 Lack of Planning Materials

Lack of planning materials is another problem facing the planning of education in Nigeria. Planning materials are not available in most ministries, departments and agencies handling the responsibilities of planning education. Noun (2009) submitted that another important constraints of educational planning in Nigeria has to do with inadequate planning tools. Such as calculating machines, computers and other materials and facilities that are essential for effective planning. It is equally important to note that educational planners in the country are not adequately consulted before policies that are related to education are formulated. Consequently, there is the tendency for them to develop programme on policies that are not clear to them or that may be difficult for them to justify.

3.5 Political Influence

In Nigeria, political office holders influences decision and policies in public institutions to favor their interest. Political influence is one of the major problems preventing effective planning of education in Nigeria. Educational planning is influenced to favor location of educational institutions in the community and village of a seating minister, Governor and president. Educational planners are not allowed to plan the location and siting of educational institutions objectively. In Nigeria, educational

institutions are not evenly distributed to meet the needs of the citizens. Some zone with less population have more educational institutions located in the zones while others with higher population have less because location of educational institutions are always been influenced by the political office holders in power. Noun (2009) submitted that the process of educational planning in Nigeria is faced with a lot of constraints. One of such is the political constraints. Educational Planning is based on the ideology and the policies of the government. Sometimes, such policies are made without giving adequate consideration to their implications. As a result, the planner is often requested to plan on the basis of policies, which might be difficult or too expensive to implement under the prevailing circumstances and available resources. To this effect planners often prepare unrealistic plans or face a situation whereby his plans are rejected, by the approving body. In addition, political rivalry among different groups in the country sometimes influences the amount of money allocated to education.

3.6 Political Instability

Political instability is another problem facing the planning of education in Nigeria. Ololube, (2013) opined that the existing political arrangement has influenced the control over educational planning in Nigeria. Political instability have had its toll on educational programs. Planning process started by one administration is brutally interrupted by the next and the differences between federal and state government education policies are quite challenging. The inability of the Nigerian political structure does not allow for education planners to be accountable for their wrong doings. Gbenu, (2012) observed that government instability has been a very serious bottleneck to plan implementation in Nigeria where there is often a frequent change of government. Planning of any kind in Nigeria is dated back as beginning in 1946. Since this time, political conditions conducive to smooth implementation of plans have been lacking in the country.

3.7 Poor Capacity Development Programme

Poor capacity development programme of educational planners in the various ministries and department of education is another major factor slowing down the planning of education in Nigeria. Majorities of educational planners working in the ministries and agencies of government in in charge of planning are not constantly been exposed to training and retraining programme. Ogunode, Gregory & Abubakar, (2020) did a study with the purpose of assessing the political officeholder attitudes towards planning of education in FCT. The results revealed that there was significant relationship between the attitudes of political officeholders and poor planning of education in FCT. The finding revealed that the majorities of the respondents disagreed that political officeholders have positive attitude toward educational planning, majorities of the respondents disagreed that adequately funding are provided for educational planning. It was also discovered that majorities of the respondents disagreed that political officeholders are support the capacity development of educational planners and 100% of the respondents disagreed that political officeholders are providing necessary planning tools for educational planner to plan education. The government should appoint people with passion for educational development and political officeholders should develop positive attitude toward educational planning in FCT by allocating adequate funds for educational planning.

4.0 Ways Forward

To address the challenges facing planning of education in Nigeria, the following were suggested: increase the funding of educational planning, generate data, provide adequate planning materials, employment of more professional planner, policy continuity and ensure constant training and retraining programme for educational planners.

- a) The government should increase the allocation for planning education in Nigeria. This will help to employ more professional planners and carry out other planning services;

- b) The government should ensure current data are generated in the country to aid effective planning of education;
- c) The government should ensure educational planner working in the various ministries and agencies of government handling planning are provided with constant training and retraining programme to increase their capacity of planning;
- d) The government should provide planning tools/materials for the educational planners in the various ministries, department and agencies of government handling planning;
- e) The government should employ more professional planners and deploy them to the ministries and agencies for effective planning of education.
- f) The government should develop a model that allows participation of all political actors in the country to participant in policy formulation and project planning so that the exit of one political party from office will not stop the implementation of the plan already done.
- g) The politicians and political actors in the government should allow the educational planners to do their work professionally and should avoid influencing their planning document to favor more allocation to their constituencies.

Conclusion

Educational planning is vital key to the realization of the education objectives in Nigeria. In Nigeria educational planning is facing many problems. This article discussed the problems facing planning of education in Nigeria and the article identified inadequate funding for planning, inadequate educational planners, lack of data/information, lack of planning materials, political influence, political instability and poor capacity development of educational planners as challenges facing planning of education in Nigeria. To solve the problems facing planning of education in Nigeria, the researchers suggested the following: increase the funding of educational planning, generate data, provide adequate planning materials, employment of more professional planner, policy continuity and ensure constant training and retraining programme for educational planners.

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