

The Need for Educational Planning and Implementation in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper tried to “justify the need for educational planning, and also tried to account for why educational planning and implementation are not in consonance in Nigeria. The paper noted that education is a vital tool for human development and planning should be seen as “the first leg in a relay race” considered as the crucial stage. The concepts of planning and educational planning were explained by Yawe, Ehiametalor, Coombs and Okwori in this paper. The paper also discussed the need for educational planning highlighting works of Maina, Platt and so many authors. Educational policy plans and the problems of implementation in Nigeria were also discussed. The paper again discussed insights towards effective implementation of educational policy plans in Nigeria and concluded that the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria is constrained by several factors ranging from faulty planning, mismanagement of educational resources and so many other factors. The paper recommended that responsive governments should ensure that necessary resources for effective educational planning and implementation are available in the right quantity and quality and that corruption at all levels must be reduced to the barest minimum”, so as to reduce mismanagement and misappropriation of educational funds.

Keywords: Educational planning, implementation, educational policy.

Introduction

The need for planning and especially in education cannot be overemphasized. Education is an important tool for human development. It is regarded as a veritable instrument for achieving national goals, Maduwesi, (2005). No wonder the nation’s evolution of deliberate plans to achieve their own goals through provision of qualitative education, Achufusi, Ezenduka& Ume, (2009). Planning is like the first giant step in a race. This is in line with Adesina (1990) as he said that:

Planning should be seen like the first leg of a relay race, in a relay race every step is important but most crucial is the first leg and if the first leg is faulty, it would affect the remaining part of the race, (p.8).

Therefore if a system lacks sound planning or its plans are improperly defined, the process would be haphazard. Planning is a future oriented process. Forecasting is involved in the

setting of goals and sub-goals as well as objective (Barasa, 2007, p.3). It is through educational planning that an administrator is able to develop ways and means of achieving educational goals and objectives.

Concepts of Planning and Educational Planning

So many authors have varied meanings to the concepts of planning and educational planning. According to (Newman as cited in Yawe, 2010, pp.11-12), “planning is the process of determining in advance, what is to be done, including classification of goals, establishment of policies, mapping out of programme and campaigns and determining specific methods or procedures and fixing day-to-day schedules”. Also, planning “involves decision-making for a future course of action; a decision which must be taken in advance” (Aderounmu & Ehiamentor 1985, p.57). In agreement planning can also be seen as a way of projecting our ideas, intentions and charting a course of action for future accomplishment of these goals.

According to Coombs, (1974) 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 student and society, (p.14).

In the same vein Okwori, (2011) sees educational planning as:

“Involving the application of rational methods; systematic analysis or explanations, through the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in terms of responding to the needs of the students and the society as a whole (p.2). Therefore educational planning can be defined in another perspective as a way of projecting ideas or intentions about education and charting a course of action towards effective actualization of these goals for the educational system in advance.

The Need for Educational Planning

Organizations are characterized by their pre-determined goals, whose success is dependent on the organizations planning strategies. The geometric growth of students in institutions of learning is a “wake-up” call to prudence if educational systems are to attain the goals of their organizations, (Maina 2000). Educational planning, in essence, has basic elements which involve an intervention of the following:

- Clarification of educational objectives and formulation of policy through problems survey.
- The definition of goals and objectives from identified problem.
- The definition of programme for realization of set goals and objectives.
- The simulation of programmes to ascertain the most alternative.
- The provision, implementation and supervision of relevant programmes after simulation.
- Programme evaluation and review, and to meet the challenges of modern education changes and goals, education must be properly planned, (Okwori, 2011, p.5). Furthermore Okwori, states that careful planning reduces emergencies and ensures that limited educational resources of a society are rationally allocated.

In agreement Yawe, (2010), also stated categorically that educational planning is done to:

“clearly identify and define the desired end-results of educational operations, make available to all the personnel clear-cut policies for their own guidance in their daily operations; to ensure that limited

educational resources (personnel, finance and materials) are rationally allocated among the various competing educational demands and programmes; to ensure that the educational interests needs and demands of the various interest groups like students, parents, staff and members of the school community are harmonized with those of the society to achieve the national objectives of education; and to avoid wastages by providing just the type and quantity of educational services needed in the society”, (p.13).

On another note Platt (1970) enumerates the following steps as being important for educational planning: proposing change, collecting relevant information; analyzing information and projecting past and present conditions into the future, which ensures that the best plan is selected to produce deliverables in education. Adesina, (1990) too says that planning ensures the quality of education, plans budgets and ensures that financial allocations reflect the importance of programmes within educational systems. It is only through strategic planning than quality and effectiveness can be achieved because planning is a base for analysis of variables of social, political and economic consequences, Aderounmu and Ehiamentor, (1985). This goes to point out that planning as a process ensures effectiveness in organizations and systems while the absence of planning has remarkable inhibitive educational goal achievement in Nigeria and the world over.

Educational Policy Plans and Problems of Implementation in Nigeria

Policy implementation in Nigeria is a problem due to different conflicting factors, although planning comes first before policy formulation but proceeds implementation. Unfortunately, educational policy plans and goal attainment have been irrevocable due to implementation constraints, Okoroma (2006). Furthermore (Oyakhilome 1986, p.26) in expressing concern about the problem of policy implementation stated thus “we know it is difficult to realize planned objectives one hundred percent; but our experience in planning education in this country shows a disturbing gap between planned objectives and attained results”

In the same vein Okeke, (1985) agrees that the problem of policy implementation is traceable to the planning stage which comes immediately after policy formulation. But on the other hand good planning that can facilitate effective implementation ought to consider such factors as the planning environment, social, political, financial and statistical problems, Okoroma (2006). In support Aghenta (1984) noted that:

“for education to achieve all ends, it has to be carefully planned. The plan must take into consideration the needs of the society; the political, socio-cultural, economic, military, scientific, and technological realists of environments are very important to its survival, (p.239)”.

Adzongo & Agbe (2009) also noted some factors as constraints to educational policy implementation in Nigeria and they include the following:

- **The nature of the economy:** Determines the type of policy to be formed, if a country is buoyant the government or leaders can set up a policy plan that will involve much financial implication. Nigeria is buoyant but because of misappropriation and mismanagement, policies hardly get to the implementation stage.

- **The non-economic factors:** This involves culture/tradition is the people's way of life; historic setting is what was there in the past, i.e. doing a kind of forecast to ascertain what will be best for the period, the past, the present and the future, mirrored together; with the attitude of the people, the level of acceptability comes to play, what the people are feeling and doing to aid or hinder implementation e.g. some people may say that the policy does have direct benefit to them so why should they bother? Our people instead of implementing policies as regards to our culture and tradition prefer to imbibe borrowed cultures which do not augur well with our society and in turn inhibit policy implementation. Our attitudes are also not encouraging; this too is a problem to policy implementation.
- **Tiers of government:** The federal, state and local governments have different means for raising funds. Some levels may raise enough for.
- **Availability of resources:** Resources here include human and material policy depends on the available resources for effective implementation. But where these resources are lacking, policy implementation becomes a problem.
- **Public pressure:** Like political on individual pressure from personal interest and bias may pose a problem to policy implementation. Politically the ruling party in Nigeria e.g. Peoples Democratic Party may work against a policy because it does not favour their party, also the same thing with individuals who may be feeling a policy does not favour their area and so it should not be implemented.
- **Ambiguity:** Some policies are too ambiguous, so implementation because a problem because people implement it the way they understand it. If a policy has many clauses, understanding may pose a problem. One person in one state may interpret the policy different from another in another state; hence there will be no uniformity in the implementation.
- **Frequent changes in policy:** When every change in government brings about drastic changes in policies, this hinders proper implementation due to lack of time for the process, (pp.76-79).

This goes to account for why policy plans and implementation in Nigeria can never be in consonance except otherwise contrary steps are taken to aid implementation especially of educational policy plans.

Towards Effective Implementation of Educational Policy Plans in Nigeria

For implementation to be effective, planning must first consider and include feasible steps to achieving implementation with realistic plans. Coombs (1974) in agreement states that:

“an educational system will be well planned and its plans well implemented only if those responsible for its various parts are themselves good planners. He added that planning to be effective, must be concerned with its own implementation – with progress made or not made, with unforeseen obstacles that arise and with how to overcome them, (p.15, 52)”.

On the other hand Okoroma (2006, p.259) advanced the following recommendations as workable educational policy for Nigeria:

- Ideas that are alien to the cultures of Nigeria should be avoided because they are bound to fail.

- Education should be removed from the sphere of politics. And made purely a constitutional matter, but not as provided by the 1979 constitution which allows escape routes for political leaders.
- The entrenchment of education as a non-negotiable right of every citizen in the constitution would help check corruption in that sector.
- Mismanagement of educational resources at any level should be made a serious offence attracting a minimum of five years imprisonment. This should be included in the next constitution of Nigeria. It is believed that in the presence of corruption no new system of education can succeed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria is constrained by several factors from faulty planning to mismanagement of educational resources and other factors mentioned in the paper. Hence educational planning and implementation cannot be in consonance except if the following suggestions are considered.

1. Responsive governments should ensure that necessary resources for effective educational planning and implementation are available in the right quantity and quality.
2. Government must have the political will for effective educational policy implementation.
3. Corruption at all levels must be reduced to the “barest minimum”, so as to reduce mismanagement and misappropriation of educational funds.
4. Sufficient funds for implementing educational policy plans should be allocated.
5. Effective and well-focused educational policies should be formed by planners as this will make implementation an easy task.
6. Continuity in implementation of educational policies will ensure effectiveness in the implementation.
7. All stakeholders involved with educational policy plans and implementation should be trained and retrained.

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