

Review

A Theoretical Perspective on Educational Planning In Nigeria

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Education, as offered across the globe (particularly in this 21st century is development driven. The implication is that, Education is conceived as a crystal ball through which the desire of the future is perceived. Therefore the planning of education in Nigeria ought to be packaged as a blue-print of actions that prescribes the sequences of activities that have to be undertaken if educational goals are to be achieved. What a plan does is to ensure that the education goals of the sector are attained in a more efficient manner (when time and resources are considered.

Keywords: Education, development, problems, Change

INTRODUCTION

It is imperative to plan education so that it does not fail to deliver efficient services and durable products' to those who are desirous of them. The entire gamut of growth and development of a society is encapsulated in her educational policies and programme. Thus the anticipated complexities and development directions are captured in the aforementioned policies which give direction to the entire economy.

Accordingly, Adewoju (2018) stated that planning is necessary because it gives guidance and also direction to educational activities and programme for a future time. In agreement with the foregoing, Onyeje (2019) stated that the essence of planning is to ensure that education is made effective such that its products and services are adequately utilized for students, or by students who need them. In this way, efficiency is injected into the system (education system).

When development in a nation, particularly in developing States in Africa, are lopsided, it is a reflection of planlessness in the educational system/offering. Most times, graduation statistics is not reflective of the

needs of the economy in terms of manpower needs. The courses studied and the programme of study has no bearing with 21st century manpower needs. Long after our colonial masters handed over power to Nigeria and left us to govern ourselves, our system of education has not evolved to the point of developing programme of study that suit our economy and our development aspirations. The system of education that was tailored to suit the needs of our colonial masters at the time is what we are adapting presently in Education.

Education as the Hub of Development

Everything is evolving. From the time educational planning began in the United States of America in the early 1960s to date, Planning has moved on in phases. This has bequeathed a sequence of progressive trend for scholars and students of Educational planning and Administration across the world. According to Agunloye (2018), the nation's

educational system is evolving at a pace that is almost imperceptible considering that the country itself is in a hurry to develop. The development aspiration must be driven by education if we must achieve any feat. Expectedly, education should be planned in a way that the scientific and technological dream of the nation is built in and properly integrated into other courses of study (Makojunola 2013). The issues that challenge the sector are multi-faceted but it is difficult to sweep them aside with the hope that a giant step-forward to be taken.

Owing to the fact that education enjoys a critical position in the business of enthroning development in developing countries, it is important that educational planning which should at all times take into cognizance the manpower needs of a country, the ecological considerations, the Socio-Cultural Milieu as well as population status.

All these presuppose that education has to be planned in the most effective and efficient way so as to make for even development in all facets of the country.

Financing education in Nigeria has been most costly. The size of the country as well as its growth potentials is not helping matters. It therefore requires a conscious and dedicated use of human and material resources to ensure that lopsidedness in growth/development is reduced to the barest. In educational planning, the setting of education objectives for closes the availability of the means and resources by which the objectives are going to be met. Planners most often consider the priorities of government viz-a-viz available options, while keeping a tab on the financial and social costs. Every effort targeted at reforming a programme or entirely replacing one should be able to take into consideration the mistakes noted with the previous programme and how the proposed will be better.

What is being emphasized is team work. It requires the cooperation of not just the planning experts but all those who occupy intervening positions along the chain. The programme implementer plays a role that is as crucial as those played by programme formulators. The objective remains the attainment of the highest level of development for the country.

Steps to Follow In Introducing Planning Change

The following are steps that can be adopted when it is observed that there exists a pressing need to introduce changes into educational planning processes. This can only happen after due consultations with relevant bodies and authorities.

(A) proposing change

Proposals detailing the observations are made. The extent to which the observations can impact on the structures on ground are stated.

(B).collection of data

Assemblage of necessary data upon which the intended change(s) would be predicated. The data gathered give flavor to the work.

(C).analysis of data

Assembled data have to be sieved and studied to suggest the way forward. Data gives weight to outcome.

(D).making projections

On the basis of the outcome, it is possible to make projections into the future situations give the trend that has existed in the time past.

(E).evaluation

At the end of the exercise, there is need to ask questions at various points. With this, it is possible to retrace steps and make amendments where necessary. This will help strengthen the changes when they become implementable.

Educational Planning Problems in Nigeria

Like it is the case with other facets of life, the field of educational planning is not left unimpacted by the challenges that confront the society. Of particular interest are the following.

1. Economic melt-down

The melt-down of economies across the world has affected virtually all spheres of human activities. Education is not left out. Funds needed for training courses and workshops may be difficult to come by. The effect of this difficulties/lack of needed funds may have long term effect or retrogressive effects on situations as they are thrown-up. With persistent devaluation of the Naira against the Dollar/Pounds, it is not difficult to expect that cost of oversea course/workshop will be high or almost unaffordable. Thus inability to attend workshop/training courses makes way for retrogression and decay. This is partly responsible for the widening gap between where we are (educationally and technologically) and where we ought to be. Inability to close the gap will increase liability and reduce the nation's ratings in this regards.

2. Scarcity of Data:

Data that are usually required for efficient planning are almost often not available. The last census conducted in Nigeria was in 2006. Between 2006 and 2021 is fifteen (15) years. Data required to make projections in various departments of human endeavor are lacking across the country. For instance, it is difficult to project the population of children that will be in primary 1 (one) next year, population of children that will be dropping out of primary 5 (five) in 2022, population

that will be in the polytechnic 2023 etc because the data needed for forecast is just not there. In the absence of such planning data, projecting into the future needs of the century in varying fields would be difficult. We then move, like people moving in the dark as we grope for the future. Expectedly, planning for any form of advancement without data, modern instruments/equipment and the wherewithal becomes all the more challenging.

3. Dirt of Qualified Planners :

Specialists in planning are not in the lack considering that universities are turning out large numbers of graduates on yearly basis. What is lacking is the percentage of the graduates that are knowledgeable in their specialization. Several things are happening in the education sector that is negatively impacting on the learners and the system.

The usual garbage-in, garbage-out syndrome has watered-down the number of proficient planners that the citadels produce. Similarly, the unpalatable conditions of service in which most public servants find themselves today does not favour retention (staff). Very many people are agitated about the unsecured nature of their job, to the extent that they can quit whenever greener pastures are found. When the best of brains depart huge gaps are created which needs to be filled by equally good hands.

4. General Insecurity and Threat to Life:

The determination or motivation to embark on a course of study that takes time and resources is usually not there. The fear of the unknown is today tormenting many people in Nigeria. There is almost no hope for tomorrow. The benefit of education is not realized overnight. It takes time to mature. The pay-off does not come in a hurry. In the uncertain times in which we live, people engage in perennial activities whose pay-off time is fairly easily determinable. Should you embark on an activity that takes two or more years to mature, and you are cut down mid-way or before the end of the duration, your labour would be classified "in-vain". Because of the problems of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, assassination, fear of death in the hands of rapists, robbery and a lot more, death appears closer than we can imagine.

In the atmosphere painted above, very few can embark on a programme of study such as educational planning. It therefore stands out that there will be manpower challenge especially when you are looking for people with requisite competencies in fields of studies such as educational planning. This situation is the same across the country. While the North-East is the epicenter for Boko-Haram, the North-West is notorious for

banditry. While North-Central is being ravaged by Harmers-Herders crisis, the IPOB uprising is choking almost everyone in the South-East. When the activities of Niger-Delta Militants are considered alongside the heat being generated by the fore-going, you will agree that Nigeria is actually sitting on a key of gun powder. We shall be lucky if it does not explode. But under such conditions as this, it will be difficult to undertake any form of planning (be it long term or short term).

5. Administrative Summersault

There is no continuity in office; from ministerial to commissioner, down to the level of the counselor at the local level. A programme of activities, started by a past administrator can be jettisoned by the incumbent however laudable it may be. The then minister of Education (Prof. Rakayatu) in the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan started a programme on Education data bank. This data bank was intended to provide statistics in almost all areas of Education for effectiveness in planning and projection. It brought a lot of relief to the sector.

Shortly afterwards, there was administrative change. That administration went with all the henchmen. The new regime jettisoned that programme and the wheel grinded to a halt. Today, the best you can hope for in terms of projections and planning statistics is the outcome of the 2006 census. It is fifteen years today since that census was conducted using fifteen year old data for planning in the 21st century can be as misleading as piloting a ship without a rider. For effective planning to step-up in Nigeria, planners require data or statistics that are dependable and recent. The present situation does not make for meaningful projections of any kind.

It is expected that the preset administration will demonstrate sufficient will power to conduct a census. In this way, there will be data for planning. Guess work will reduce to the barest limits.

6. Poor Motivation:

The system of education as operated today is projected and constructed to function in poor motivation. When people work grumbling disenchanted and discouraged, ostensibly, the Nigerian situation is not different. The inability of the present regime to implement the new minimum wage for workers as agreed by labour, can embitter the workers to a large extent. The inability to effects this wage regime for lecturers in the nation's Federal Universities has dampened their morale and consequently slowed them down. Lack of motivation is a show-stopper. It can weaken the strong and discourage the shrewd.

Related to the foregoing is the challenge of indiscipline. Indiscipline is like a poison. It can infest, infect, misdirect and destroy. According to Suleiman (2017), vision is blurred by indiscipline, as the individual begins to perceive in the ordinary. Such a person can easily become disillusioned. Therefore, when poor motivation, coupled with indiscipline exert pressure on an individual, the resulting disillusionment can hamper good intentions.

7. Technological backwardness.

There exists a recurring problem of technological drawback in most developing countries, of which Nigeria is one. In particular, there is a gap in technological innovations in planning mechanisms. The entire world is yearning for development. When newer ways of doing things emerge, older ways are abandoned and the world moves forward as the frontiers of civilization expands. There is development. This is happening in all spheres of life. Educational planning is not left out. In the 21st century, the world is awash with advanced technology related to planning processes and approaches that adapt easily to emerging issues in educational planning and the challenges of development.

What is lacking at present is the utilization of opportunities to tap into these reservoirs and convert the chances they create into milestones. Writing in a related view, Alloy (2018), stated that deployment of computer into educational planning has thrown up several opportunities for planners to leverage on. Such in-roads have being created, designed and popularized in line with the latest you can find in the internet. However, poverty is biting. Economies of most Governments in the world are melting. As such, poor funding has affected most governments' budgetary allocation for education. Thus, funds for training and retraining of staff or /and students are everywhere lacking. Thus, as stated elsewhere, the gap continues to widen.

CONCLUSION

Whatever is one's stand point, it is a truism that planning is crucial to the effective conduct of educational affairs. It is necessary to plan because planning avails us of the opportunity to properly appraise the various options that are there. Clearly, there are challenges. But one thing we can also stand – up for is that the best in us. They won't put us down. Else civilization is in danger.

RECOMMENDATION

The population of the world is growing. Some countries are already attaining such status as can make their government uncomfortable. This brings to fore the fact that planning is necessary if individuals are to be provided for. Resources are in short supply everywhere. Without planning, it will be impossible to think of getting the best for our people.

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