

EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND INNOVATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is a very vital instrument in the improvement of any nation's socio-economic, political and technological structures. The need for effective planning for reform and innovation in educational management in any nation cannot be over-emphasized as it helps the nation to meet global standards. When educational reform is effectively planned and implemented, it speeds up structural merging of the society by matching social, political and economic opportunities. In Nigeria, educational planning has done a lot in driving the educational system but has not been able to achieve much in terms of reforming the educational system regardless of its importance, due to numerous factors of negative influence. It is in this context that this paper focuses on the educational planning efforts in educational reform and innovation in Nigeria and the factors militating against its success in achieving educational objectives. Suggestions concerning various areas of educational reform and innovation were made towards useful educational reform in Nigeria.

Key words: Education, Innovation, Reform, Educational planning, Effective planning

Education is the system of passing on knowledge from one person to the other. It is the act of preparing the mind, potential and personality of a person through teaching or study. It is an unending process with the aim of socializing people into the community for the development of individuals and the society. According to Adeniyi, (2001), education is an important tool in the social, political and economic advancement of any nation. It is an influential force that drives a nation from an under developed state to a developed one through scientific, technological and social transformation.

The role of education in Nigeria's development is captured in the federal republic of Nigeria (2014) National Policy on Education (NPE) that "Education in Nigeria is an instrument par excellence for National development" (FRN, 2014). Thus, educational efforts are aimed at the development of persons for better self-realization, effective citizens as well as social, political, economic and technological progress through educational reforms which is a re-thinking of the function of education in national development. Reforms are basically reconsideration of the goals and objectives of education and efforts towards the attainment of these objectives as the worth of any educational systems investment lies in its ability to continuously serve its stakeholders better and remains important to nation building hence, the principal focus of educational planning is to make education more effective for the development of the individual and the society (Adeyemi, and Oguntimehin, 2000).

Need for Educational Reforms in Nigeria

Educational reform and innovation in any nation is tantamount to the inoculation of new belief, skill or approach into educational system that will improve the internal and external efficiency of the system and develop the nation's socio-political, economic and technological structures. Educational reforms and innovation entail bringing about a change in the state of affairs. Reforms are described as new ways of doing things to meet the challenges posed by new technological development and to improve the quality of the educational system (Fadipe, and Adepoju, 2006). In this period of globalization, and information and communication technology development, it is very hard to discuss education at any level in seclusion with change, reform and innovations as presently, teaching and learning activities are learners-centered rather than teachers-centered. To make sure that educational arrangements are structured and made more relevant to the desires and goal of the society, new and appropriate ideas and approaches must be introduced into the educational system through planning.

Planning is the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, directed at achieving goals. It is the process of determining a scheme for accomplishing a purpose, such a scheme of arrangement is made beforehand by preparing methods of achieving objectives. Planning is a rational process of preparing and coordinating a set of decision for future actions aimed at achieving objectives by optimal means. Planning is a guide to the actions that are to be implemented at a future date (Peretomode 2001).

The basis for planning is to effectively use available resources to achieve set objective. The planning process involves approaches for influencing variables at the time of planning and projecting into the future. Salami, *et al.* (2003) see planning as the process of obtaining and investigating information and using them to make projection for future development in human, physical and financial resources needed to achieve proposed development. Hence, Ololube (2009) stressed that educational planning is the use of rational, organized analysis to the process of educational growth with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the desires of the society. The main focus of educational planning is to make education more effective for the development of the individual and the society.

Fadipe (2001) noted that educational planning is the process of applying scientific or rational method to the process of educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system through a planning device. It is a rational process of preparing and coordinating a set of economic decision for future actions aimed at achieving objectives optimally. Educational Planning serves as a guide to the actions that are to be implemented at a future date (Peretomode 2001). In his view, Ololube (2009) stressed that educational planning is the use of rational, organized analysis to the process of educational advancement with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs of the society. In the same vein Salami (2009), opined that educational planning 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.

A review of educational process of ancient societies shows that planning was entrenched in their educational system. Plato proposed a well-articulated educational plan which took into account the political and leadership needs of the Athenians. The Spartans also planned their education to suit their military, social and economic objectives. In addition, John Knox in the sixteenth century

prepared an educational plan that helped the Scots achieve spiritual and material well-being (Salami, *et al.*, 2003).

Great educators and philosophers have made contributions to educational planning in their own times and different societies are obvious in literature of education. To a great extent, therefore, educational planning of today claims an unbroken ancestry to great ancient educators and philosophers. It is evident from literature on education that educational planning in the ancient times was aimed at making education an instrument for the achievement of national goals.

This is still the aim of educational planning today procedures and methodology employed may differ. However, differences between ancient educational planning and modern educational planning are in scope of advancement of knowledge in economics, business management and computers which are great assets to today's educational advancement. This implies that for any reform to take place and be continual within the educational system, it must be properly planned for. The rationale for planning is to effectively utilize available resources to achieve predetermined objective through a process that will involves strategies for manipulating several variables at the time of planning and their projection into the future.

Educational reforms are changes in ideas of the role of education in nation building. It is basically a review of the national goals and provision of answers to fundamental questions of the kind of society that is needed, Structures of the society, the type of education needed to develop the society, financial implication for the provision of teachers, infrastructural facilities, material resources, curriculum, etc. (Obanya 2004). The Nigerian educational system currently is experiencing series of scientific, technological, economic, political and social innovations such as the introduction of literacy education, computer education, family life education, the use of information and communication technology in education and modern economic theories, ideas, techniques and methods into the school curriculum requires proper planning.

The rationale for the involvement of Nigerian educational system in reform programmes is a major force in shaping the objectives and methods of the education to accommodate such advancement for rapid educational development. The most common reasons for introducing reform and innovation into the Nigerian educational structure, curriculum and methods, as opined by Adepaju (1998) are the need for:

1. Standardization

The need to improve on standard is one of the most talked about issues in the Nigerian educational system today. The standard of the educational system has been generally condemned by many people, both expert and non- experts. Since educational change is found useful where the standard of the system is declining or where its existing state is producing public objection or conflict, its introduction is found to be relevant.

2. Future expectations

Change may be preferred if there is a sign that the future expectations of the educational system are superior. Education is said to be performing different functions which may be expressed in terms of human resource and national development in Nigeria (Obanya, 2004). Thus, to meet such future demands, educational reforms must be properly planned to accomplish desirable result.

3. Public demand

A major factor that may influence a reform in the system is public demand. The public may advocate for a course that they consider will help their children and the society at large such as moral education, the use information communication technology and entrepreneurial skills. If they therefore, demand a change, such change will be integrated into the educational system.

4. Resourcefulness

An educational reform may be spontaneous if the members of staff desire to be more resourceful by introducing new ideas such as the use of modern technology in teaching which may lead to the achievement of personal goals and general teaching objectives of that programme.

5. Achievement

The needs for achievement always allow positive change to take place wherever there is need for improvement or accomplishment. In other words stakeholders in the educational system would always like new ideas that will improve teaching and learning condition to be introduced in the school for the accomplishment of goals.

Planning for Educational Reform

Reforms and innovation are major models that must be built into a system that is aimed at standing the test of modern era when zeal is greatly substituting conservatism. Change therefore, is expected and remains a major challenge which modern organizations face is building an atmosphere where speedy and meaningful improvement is achievable. There is no doubt that for development to be witness reform and innovations are essentials. The complications in modern organizations and the need for efficiency in the face of competition from others has resulted in the increasing endorsement for reform and innovation to be inserted into Nigerian educational system and more particularly in the areas of structure, context, curriculum content as well as methods of transmitting knowledge by teachers in schools (Peretomode, 2001).

The modification of the educational system is a prerequisite for educational improvement and the planned modification is likely to be more effective than unplanned modification at the long run. However, when one looks at the rate at which reform and innovation take place in our educational system at present, one tends to conclude that the rate is not proportionate with that of the society as a whole. For education to be made relevant and to guarantee compliance with the societal needs, reform and innovation must be planned for, especially in structure, curriculum and methods (Salami, 2009).

Evaluation of Educational Reform and Innovation

Evaluation is a process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by students in educational programmes. It is also the process of determining the extent to which student experiences leads to the achievement of stated educational objectives.

The term evaluation often implies different things. To a classroom teacher, it means testing, conducted at the end of the lesson aiming at the outcome of the lesson. However, as it is well-known, testing is only an aspect of evaluation and does not represent the range of activities and roles played by evaluation

Evaluation is unavoidable in the teaching and learning process as it takes appropriate action to ensure programme efficiency. It is very important to evaluate the extent to which educational reform

achieves the purpose for which it was designed. Indeed, it plays a key role on the scaling up process of reform and innovation.

Evaluation in educational reform can be carried out in these stages

- Before the reform, Pre-reform evaluation
- During the reform, Diagnostic evaluation
- After the reform, Post-reform evaluation

In introducing major reforms into a system, there is the need for evaluation to appraise the situation on ground to determine what should be put in place before the reform is carried out. Likewise, evaluation can be done during the course of reform. This takes a diagnostic view of the reform. It can also be carried out at the end of the reform which determines the extent to which the outcomes agrees with the original plan before starting the reform.

According to Fadipe and Adepoju (2006), when educational reforms are evaluated they help in setting, sanitization and clarifying realistic goals and finding out the degree to which the objectives of reform have been realized and in refining the strategies or techniques to use to bring about expected changes.

Educational Reform and Innovation Management

Management of educational reform and innovation is perhaps the most critical and invasive job facing human kind at the moment. Society is undergoing a structural insurgency with multiple and basic changes in economic, social and political institutions. For education to achieve its requisite function, it must be modified towards the needs and aspirations of the society. This agrees with the National Policy on Education (2014), as it is stated that educational efforts shall be made to relate education to overall societal needs. This implies that educational reform must be driven by the need to yield to the demands of the society where the reform is to take place. Hence the culture of the society determines whatever form the reform should take. The management of educational reforms is very important to ensure self-reliance as self-reliance is important in education. Self-reliance has a very philosophical meaning. It is not just that children should be taught some handiwork or manual skills by which they may be sustained but, manual labour which assists them to learn how to use their hands and be self-sufficient. It implies that education must be of such a quality that it will train students in intellectual self-reliance and make them independent thinkers. If this is to become the chief aim of learning, the whole process of learning would be transformed. The purpose of learning is freedom and a man who has truly learnt is truly free and independent as he/she has acquired new knowledge and equipped his/herself for independence (Fadipe and Adepoju, 2006).

Problems of Effective Planning for Educational Reform and Innovation

There are many problems affecting effective planning for educational reform and innovation in Nigeria, among which are:

Financial constraint

For effective and ample planning for educational reform, there is the call for adequate financial resources to develop it. The percentage of the annual national budget always earmarked for education is too meager to meet up funding challenges. Hence, there is hardly enough fund for the planning unit of the educational sector to embark and implement educational reform and innovation.

Inconsistent educational policies

Educational policies are changed frequently by the Nigerian government. These are results of the changing socio- economic and political factors but these affect the planning of education. Many plans are abandoned before they were ready for implementation due to government orders. In addition, there is always a gap between policy formulation and implementation which renders the educational reform more or less irrelevant.

Unreliable Data

A major problem affecting educational planning in Nigeria is unreliable data. Lack of accurate statistical data due to unreliable national census renders efforts relating to educational planning or any other form of planning in Nigeria unproductive. Yet, the success of any form of planning depends on reliable data.

Inadequate Personnel

Manpower is very important in planning and implementation of any programme. There are no enough experts in Nigeria in the area of educational planning. There are small units in the ministries of education that are responsible for educational planning. These units are staffed with educational officers who rose from the rank. Almost all of them have no formal training in educational planning and statistics. They can rarely use the information gathered to interpret the educational situation of the country for proper planning of educational reform to improve educational quality (Adeyemi and Oguntimehin, 2000).

Towards Sustainable Educational Reform in Nigeria

The importance of effective educational reform an innovation cannot be over flogged. Thus to make educational reform useful and sustainable in Nigeria, reforms must be based on educational policy with achievable objectives that conforms to ethical standards. It should be comprehensive so as to control the rate at which policy changes to give room for continuity by involving stakeholders in the planning stage and the need for a centralized decision making structure to guide against unnecessary changes in the course of achieving the stated goals of the reform

Another important issue is the need for disciplined and effective leadership for the planning, implementation, supervision and review of planned reform policy and finally, the need for the stabilization of the Nigerian economy in order to reduce problems of educational reform funding.

Conclusion

The article has attempted to draw attention to the need to make educational reform and innovation effective and sustainable through effective planning. The importance of effective planning in educational reform and innovation cannot be over-emphasized as educational reform and innovation are critical for reflection in order to achieve the stated objectives of education in this era of globalization. The paper has examined the concepts of planning, educational planning and the importance of introducing educational reforms and innovation in the Nigeria educational system. Identified ways of evaluating and managing educational reforms, limiting factors to the successful planning and implementation of educational reform and innovation among which are social, economic, technical and political in nature and proffer solutions towards making educational reform sustainable in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Change is dynamic and any institution that does not welcome reforms does not want to improve hence this paper recommends that

1. Educational reform should be directed towards meeting the needs and aspiration of the society
2. There should be continuity in educational policies and programmes, plans should not be jettisoned but implementation fully by government
3. Government should increase the percentage of the annual budget for education and such funds be fully utilize for educational programmes
4. Experts on educational planning should be trained to curb the problem of man power in planning educational programmes

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