



# “Planning as an Instrument for National Development in Nigeria”

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Educational planning is prompted by factors such as population growth in relation to educational opportunities and the demand for education, manpower needs, environmental or ecological considerations, cultural, social and economic changes, as well as communication needs among other factors. This means that educational planning in Nigeria, must take cognizance of the physical, social, economic and developmental priorities of the nation.

The success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning and therefore calls for a judicious financial and administrative planning, taking into account other needs of the society.

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The success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning and therefore calls for a judicious financial and administrative planning, taking into account other needs of the society.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section one looks at the introduction and meaning of educational planning in Nigeria. Section two deals with types of educational planning in Nigeria. Three treats the educational planning constraints in Nigeria, while part four look at the recommendations, summary and conclusion.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Education as an engine for economic, social and political transformation deserves more than casual planning. A carefully planned system of education ultimately proves to be more cost-effective, efficient and easier to operate than a haphazardly planned system. Effective planning of education becomes imperative especially in developing nations with limited natural and human resources that cannot be wasted on costly mistakes arising from planlessness. Educational planning must reflect the stage of development of a nation including its needs and readiness to execute the planned objectives. Educational planning is prompted by factors such as population growth in relation to educational opportunities and the demand for education, manpower needs, environmental or ecological considerations, cultural, social and economic changes, and communication needs among other

factors. This means that educational planning must take cognizance of the physical, social, economic and developmental priorities of the nation. Educational planning therefore, calls for a judicious financial and administrative planning.

### a) Definition of Educational Planning

Denga (1989:56) has defined educational planning as the formulation of educational policies and objectives, the coordination of various educational proposals, the projection of enrolments, compilation of school statistics, education costing and budgeting, establishment of new schools, and the expansion of the existing ones. It also involves a systematic forecasting of educational growth rates, staffing, financing, directing, and experimentation.

Planning in the other hand means a conscious and deliberate use of the resources of the community for achieving pre-determined objectives. Prof. H. D. Dickson, in Stephen and Osagie (1985:408) stressed that, planning is the making of major economic decisions what and how much is to be produced and to whom it is to be produced and to who it is to be allocated by the conscious decision of determinant authority, on the basis of a comprehensive survey of the economic system as a whole.

Educational planning as instrument of development takes cognizance of the close links which must be established between the objectives on the one hand and the means and resources to achieve these objectives on the other. It involves the governments' priorities and options and also indicated the possible financial, social and economic consequences of the plan. A sound should take into account the existing flows in the previous system and should show how the proposed plan will be better than the previous one.

Educational planning requires team effort. It is not the sole responsibility of the planning experts. Denga (1986:57) has indicated that other members of the team whose cooperation is needed include demographers, economists, sociologists, and psychologists. These people according to Denga, together can work out the estimates of how many children will be educated at any particular educational level for a given period of time, the number of teachers required, arrangements for the training of these teachers and their postings, the equipment needed, the most effective ways of financing the plan and combating wastage.

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Educational planning in Nigeria covers all levels of education primary, secondary and tertiary – and each level requires different modalities of planning. Long range and short range objectives are planned for skillful execution. An important aspect of educational planning involves directing the quest for fundamental restructuring of learning arrangements.

There are specific units in the federal and state Ministries of Education:

- ✚ Such as Educational planning section
- ✚ Federal Inspectorate
- ✚ Vocational and non-formal education; and
- ✚ International education section, all at the federal Ministry of Education. While at the state ministries of education the following functions are performed:
  - Planning, research and development of education at state level;
  - Policy and control and administration of education at primary and secondary levels at state level;
  - Education services;
  - Inspectorate services to improve and maintain standards;
  - Co-ordination of the activities of school boards and/or local education authorities.
  - Examinations particularly certification of primary school teachers, testing and evaluation;
  - Establishment of state registries and teachers;

Ministry of Education both at state and Federal levels will be responsible for preparing their educational development plan, taking into account economic, social and other needs of the society (National Policy on Education, 1981:45). It must however, be stated that planning activities of the experts are constrained by political decisions of the government in power. Besides, the interference by the political authorities, educational planning is constrained by the shortage of experts in educational research and planning, inaccurate information on involvements and the number of teacher's and the upsurge of educational programmes that characterize developing nations in a great hurry to provide education for their citizens. This constraints to educational planning would be discussed later in details.

#### b) *The Objectives and Basis of Educational Planning in Nigeria*

Educational planners must have a basis and direction for their actions. They should know where they are trying to go. Educational planning must also reflect the national philosophy and development objectives. For example, educational planning in Nigeria must reflect the five main national objectives as stated in the second National Development Plan (1970) which was endorsed by the government as the necessary

foundation for the National Policy on Education (1981:7). These five main objectives include the building of:

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy;
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

If the above national objectives are used as base for planning educational objectives, then the quality of instruction at all levels will be oriented towards inculcating values such as freedom for the individuals to make national educational decisions, equal educational opportunities for all citizens at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of educational, respect for the worth and dignity of individual citizens, respect for the dignity of labour, a healthy moral and spiritual development of individuals and a sense of responsibility to work together for the common good of the society.

School supervisors, teachers, counselors and administrators will then ensue that children are educated according to their individual capacities, so that they become moral and cultured citizens, with good mental and physical health, and with the necessary guidance and counseling to choose educational programmes and subsequently occupation and trades that will benefit them and the society.

Educational planning assumes that the values of the individual and those of the society are catered for in the final implementation of the plan. For example, in order to include some of the salient values of the society, the planned kit should comprise;

- Moral Education- ethics and refinement, moral responsibility, and the spirit of service.
- Physical ducation- The improvement of good healthy, both mental and physical and a sporting spirit.
- Intellectual education- The improvement of thinking, acquisition of knowledge techniques and principles conducive to a useful and happy life.
- Practical education- Promotion of industrious habits, perseverance and training in manual skills that are basic to good living and occupation. Several other examples could be given Denga, 1986:58.

The above values as well as objectives are general and all inclusive. A careful study of these values

and objectives are the basis of educational planning. It is the task of educational planners and administrators to clarify these planned objectives and to implement them. Education planners must take cognizance of the resources of the national or community in which they operate.

Furthermore, the success of any system of education hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate financing. The school systems, and consequently their management and day-to-day administration should grow out of the life and social, ideas or belief of the community which they serve. Consequently the administrative machinery for the national education system based on three cardinal principles:-

- i. Effective lines of communication between the local community and the state and national machinery for policy formulation and implementation;
- ii. intimate and direct participation and involvement at the local levels in the administration and management of the local school management boards;
- iii. devolution of functions where by:-
  - Planning, financing, coordination and direction of the total educational effort within the state is placed in the hands of the state Ministry, Department or Directorate for education;
  - The management of schools is placed in the hands of district school boards of management and
  - The integration of educational development and policy with national objectives and programmes which is made the responsibility of a federal Ministry, Department or of a Federal Ministry, Department or Directorate of Education (NPE, 1981:44).

To accomplish these objectives of educational planning in Nigeria, government has already established a Federal Inspectorate Service and an education planning section in the Federal Ministry of Education.

These sections take charge of the following functions:

- i. To ensure adequate and effective planning for all educational services;
- ii. To provide efficient and administrative and management control for maintenance and movement of the system;
- iii. To provide adequate and balanced financial support for all educational services; and
- iv. To ensure quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services.,

Finally, the government of Nigeria has established planning, research and development of education at state levels; responsible for preparing their

educational development plan, taking into account economic, social and other needs of the society.

## II. TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA

Educational planning in Nigeria dates back to the missionary activities through the colonial period when Lord Lugard actually formulated educational plans. The plans by Lord Lugard helped to shape development plans including educational planning which came into full swing in the early 1950s. Educational planning in Nigeria therefore however started from the 1950a.

The first example of educational planning in Nigeria, is that by the former Western Region of Nigeria in 1952 the regional government proposed the introduction of free education to come into effect in January, 1955. To make this proposal succeed, the government proposed a large-scale training of teachers, expanded the existing teacher training Colleges and purchased adequate equipment for the proposed schemes. Several planning committees were set-up to work out details for effective implementation of the plan. The scheme was implemented as scheduled.

The scheme however, ran into unforeseen difficulties. One of these was the inadequacy of teachers led to poor quality of teaching and falling standards of education generally. There was an upsurge in the number of pupils since education was free and compulsory. Equipment were inadequate. Schools were not properly supervised because there were fewer supervisors compared to the number of pupils. The budget for education rose from N4.4m million in 1954 to N5.4 (10.8) million in 1955. Over 87% of the budget for education was spent on primary education alone. Since there was a drop in the price of cocoa in the world market, the government's source of revenue from cocoa dwindled considerably.

After six years of operation, the plan was reviewed with a view to detecting errors in planning and making necessary corrections. It was indeed clear that the planning was faulty.

Another example is that introduced in the former Eastern Region which has been described by Ozigi and Canham (1979) as "hastily prepared". The poor planning at the initial stage led to shortage of teachers, equipment, buildings and other essentials. Like the government of Western Region, the government of Eastern Region set up the Dike committee, which later found out that the government was spending over 30% of its national resources on education, and that most of the budget on education was exhausted on primary education alone.

The committees therefore recommend qualitative rather than quantitative education. A compromise was then reached whereby a three year non-fee paying system and a three year fee paying



system based on the estimated local distributions was adopted by the government.

The third example of educational planning in Nigeria is the case of Northern Nigeria where educational planning between 1962 and 1968 was guided by Ashby Commission's Report Recommendation that:-

- a) 10% of all children completing primary education should proceed to secondary education.
- b) 30% of those completing WASC (West African School Certificate) should be admitted into Institutions of higher learning including university.
- c) 25% of all children should complete primary education.

The above stages preceded the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Here again, planning problems adversely affected the scheme, and by 1967, 11% overall enrolment was attained.

The demand for enrolment into secondary school however, exceeded Ashby Commission's estimate by 1967 when 11.4% was recorded instead of the 10% estimated by the commission.

From this time to 1976, the six universities then in existence (Ibadan, Lagos, Ife, Benin, Ahmadu Bello and Nsukka) could not even cope with the number of candidates aspiring to enter university. By 1977/78 academic session several universities were established in addition to the six other universities that had existed.

For planning increasingly evidence where the older universities began to complain of funds, teachers and other resources. The National University Commission not only resorted to overseas training of staff for Nigerian universities but also started legislating against further establishment of new universities. Today, the numerous universities in Nigeria hardly have funds for expansion or even for the maintenance of the existing structure; resulting to crisis in the university system in Nigeria.

The fourth examples of poor planning are the universal primary education schemes launched in September 1976 by the Federal Government. According to the announcement by the Federal Government, the UPE became compulsory in 1979. apparently, the Federal Government had assumed full financial responsibility for this scheme.

Barely one year after the scheme had become operative, it became clear that the planning was faulty. Some of the major difficulties included the shortage of teachers, classroom space, equipment, funds to purchase the essential materials. While some of the schools were overenrolled, others were under-enrolled. The whole nation was dotted with primary schools that were poorly maintained, some abandoned. The Federal Government started shifting some of the financial burden onto the state and local governments, and even to the communities in which these schools were

situated. It was again clear that the planning was faulty and short-sighted.

It was not based on adequate statistics and demographic data, and was not backed up with enough teachers, enough teaching materials, buildings and funds to pay staff salaries.

The fifth example of educational planning and policy in Nigeria is the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1982. This coded numeric observation means that children will spend six years at the primary education level. Six years at the secondary, but the secondary years will be divided into three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary. The last four years are expected to be spent in the university (a tertiary level of education).

The 6-3-3-4 system of education in theory, places a central emphasis on pre-vocational education and academic in order to provide the needed technical manpower. It also aims at providing avenue for those not academically inclined to branch off into a vocational school where they are more likely to implement their talent (see NPE, 1981; 17-18).

A remark that could be made in terms of the system is that the planners were not fully aware of the demands of this system in terms of equipment, classroom space, technical expertise, technical advice and infrastructural facilities among others essentials. Most of the teaching staff at the initial stage had to be recruited from overseas at a high cost. Little preparation was made regarding the provision of the 6-3-3-4 system into the most appropriate educational programmes and consequently the most appropriate occupations ultimately. However teachers for the primary schools will be trained was not specified in the 6-3-3-4 system if the teacher grade two institutions would be phased out or not. It is likely that the drop-out rate will exceed the educational provision made to cater for them.

In all the above examples of educational planning in Nigeria, it became evident that sound planning is necessary. Less developed nations lack accurate statistics and demographic data, trained manpower in educational research and planning, and the necessary facilities to implement plans when they are made. (Denga, 1986; 60-62). It must be emphasized that there is still room for growth and improvement in education planning in Nigeria.

### III. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING CONSTRAINTS IN NIGERIA

The job of planning or educational planning in general is to select form among the repertoire of possible arrangements and experimental evidence those educational programmes that seems to be true offer reasonable prospects of helping to transform education in the desirable direction. In the LDCs, nations with scarce resources or with resources that

await full exploitation, it is essential to plan effectively and use the resources most parsimoniously.

Educational planning in developing countries (Nigeria in particular) is compounded by a number of constraints. These are financial, statistical, and political and planning manpower constraints countries (Nigeria in particular) is compounded by a number of constraints. These are financial, statistical, political and planning manpower constraints.

Financial constraints are tied to economic fluctuations of a country. The fiscal resources to buy services and materials needed to execute the plans are essential. Foreign loans are not dependable in financing educational plans or economic projects (A lack of financial resources causes the abortion of planned projects). A good example in Nigeria is the suspension of the National Open University in 1984 under the guise that it was not financially affordable at the time it was being operated.

The second constraint is the issue of inadequate or reliable and valid statistical data to serve as a basic for planning constitutes a serious constraint to educational planning. The statistical ability of many planners is inadequate for accurate projections. Adesina (1981) reports that 1944 Ten years educational plan were both based on faulty and incomplete data of the 1931 census.

Political constraints include a forceful or abrupt termination of governments. The effect of this on educational planning is that many plans cannot be fully executed as the change of government usually introduces a new package on educational planning and disrupts the previous plan as a whole.

Finally, another constraint to educational planning in Nigeria and the LDCs in general, involves a lack of inadequate planning experts to plan and execute educational projects. The current emphasis on training experts in educational planning and administration is lop sided in the sense that more administrators are trained compared to educational planners. It becomes thus difficult to produce enough experts in educational planning to carry out planning duties. The production of planning experts is further slowed down by a lack of competent trainers to produce planning experts.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having seen some of the constraints to educational planning in Nigeria and in view of the importance attached to educational planning, it is therefore recommended that educational planners should;-

- a) Place more emphasis on science education and plan for the introduction of inquiry and problem solving methods.
- b) Plan to relate the world of work to education.

- c) Identify educational resources that are not now employed for effective utilization in education
- d) Diversify and create more educational and vocational opportunities for students with varying potentials.
- e) Revise admission arrangement sot encourage multiple entry into various courses according to the qualification of the entrants.
- f) Re-define education at all levels and restructure it bearing in mind the needs of the society, the learner, the subject matter, the stage of development, the socio-economic challenge and political influences that impact on educational programmes.
- g) Educational plans should be revamped from time to time to keep abreast current change according to new demands and needs of the society.
- h) Strive for accurate demographic and factual data which will make planning realistic and lasting value of education.
- i) Examine possibilities of harnessing new techniques into learning to make education more pragmatic and functional to the individual and society in general.
- j) Introduce sufficient democracy into the educational system by planning for participation in educational governance by students, school administrators and teachers in general, where such does not exist.

#### V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Education as an engine for economic, social and political transformation deserves more than casual planning. Our educational system must be effectively given more attention.

Educational planning must be in relation to educational opportunities and the demand for education, manpower needs, environmental or ecological considerations as well as cultural, social, economic changes and communication needs of the society.

Educational planning in Nigeria, must therefore take cognizance of the physical, social, economic and developmental priorities of the nation in general. Finally, since the success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning, it therefore calls for judicious financial and administrative planning; taking into account other needs of the society.

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