



## EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND WAY FORWARD

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### Abstract

In Nigeria, educational planning has faced numerous challenges that has affected the development of education because educational planning is vital to the realization of the education objectives.. In this paper, the presenter will at the concept of education and educational planning. The paper will also explore the various factors that have contributed to these challenges and propose potential solutions to address them. The paper is a seminal paper and it' depends on secondary data. The secondary data was collected from both online and print resources. Specifically, the seminal paper identified poor funding, inadequate data for planning, constraints of skilled personnel, political problem, constraints of inadequate planning tools, constraints of implementation, administrative bottleneck, inadequate training, poor forecasting, gap between planners and the implementers, lack of planning tools and facilities and corruption as challenges militating against educational planning in Nigeria. Additionally, the paper recommends increment in the funding of educational planning, generation of current educational data, employment of adequate professional education planners,



provision of adequate planning tools, provision of constant training for educational planning in the ministries of education, deployment of technology to curtail corruption in educational administration, acquisition of modern forecasting equipment,

**Keywords:** Education, Educational planning, Problems

## 1.0 Introduction

Education is a process that transfer knowledge, skills, and character traits that comes or manifests in various forms to empower the individual to be social and economic useful to himself or herself and the society. Education is an organized and planned process that leads to acquisition of knowledge from an institute of learning for personal and national development (Ogunode, Solomon, & Idonigie, 2024). Education as an activity is as old as man across cultures. It is therefore a concept that people have severally defined according to their own perceptions. According to Emenike (2004), education is the acquisition of knowledge that tends to train and develop the individual. Education embraces not only school experiences but also indirect or incidental influences which help us to learn, such influences and activities affect our character, behaviours and perceptions.

Education is the process by which individuals are selected and assigned social roles while the second shows that the level of development in a society is dependent on the type (or quality) of education given to its members. All in all, education is a continuous learning process through which members of a society acquire requisite knowledge and skills to facilitate effective performance of assigned social responsibilities (NOUN, 2012).

Education is the true way to sustainable development of a country's economy. The world of today is technology- driven especially information technology. Therefore, education in this area is important for the future economic development of developing nations. Similarly, education is a promoter of national interest. A good educational system produces people with critical intelligence and wisdom. These people can work independently and come out with independent results and conclusions from given facts. Such conclusions stand to benefit the nation and the people (Akpan, 2014).

Education helps to produce global citizenship that works for the benefit of humanity. Such educated people exhibit humility, have moral integrity and are wise and tolerant. They work for the common good of man. Thus, the development of all aspect of national economy depends on the manpower development through education. It is on the basis of this that educational planning becomes imperative (Akpan, 2014). Ogunode (2020) noted that educational objectives can only be realized through effective educational planning. Educational planning according NOUN (2012)



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.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework - System Theory**

This seminal paper is hinged on system theory. The system theory was propounded by Ludwig von Bertelentty (1928) who pointed out that the system approach focused on the total work system and the inter-relationships of structure and behaviour, and the range of variables in the system. The system approach, therefore, encourages education managers to view the education “both as a whole and as part of a larger system.” The idea is that any part of a system’s activities affects all other part and thus the system as a whole” The first task of this approach is to break the whole into logical parts that are interconnected in an orderly fashion. The next task is to study the component part and strive to understand how they perform in various circumstances. Education can be liken to be a system made up of many sub-component that needs to work and function together to realize the objectives of the whole system. Planning is the process of specifying goals, establishing priorities, and otherwise identifying and sequencing action steps to accomplish the goals.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that educational planning which a sub-component in education is an important aspect of the entire educational system. Education is a system made up of component such as; educational financing, educational supervision, educational management, educational technology, educational evaluation and educational planning. All these component must be sound and work together in order to realize the objective of education.

## **2.0 Conceptual Terms**

### **2.1 Concept of Educational Planning**

Educational planning involves the process of identifying educational needs, the direction which education should take and how to implement the decisions taken. Educational planning is the application of a rational and systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the need and the goals of the students and the society (NOUN, 2012). Educational planning involves a systematic and scientific set of decisions for future action with the aim of achieving set educational goals and objectives through effective use of scarce resources. It provides the tool for coordinating and controlling the direction of the educational system so that educational objectives can be realized. It is a process of identifying and classifying educational needs of a nation and the direction education should take and the strategies for implementing decisions concerning educational development (Akpan, 2014).



Educational planning is a continuous process. Therefore, it does not end when the plan is completed on paper and approved by the relevant authorities such as the State Executive Council or even the Ministry of Education. It is also concerned with the implementation of the plan, the progress made, and problems encountered in the process. Educational planning involves 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 programmes until the anticipated goals are achieved (NOUN, 2012). Comb cited in (Akpan, 2000) described 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 and goals of the learners and the society. This means that educational planning should take into account the needs of the pupils/students in terms of learning facilities and equipment, textbooks, classroom spaces and qualified educational personnel. In meeting the needs of the society, educational planning should take cognizance of the manpower, cultural, social and communication needs of the society (nation) as well as the economic changes (Akpan, 2000).

## **2.2 Phases in Educational Planning Process**

The main phases in the planning process as identified by Longe (2003) are policy making, plan formulation and plan implementation and evaluation. Policy making is often performed by the 'government of the day' or the 'polity' through the legislature and the executive. A plan is initiated with broad objectives, the details of which are prepared in the next phase. Plan formulation is a technical function involving statistical analysis to back up the plan. This phase is also referred to as plan technology. At this stage, direction is given to the policy maker as to whether or not it is feasible to undertake a particular educational project. Recommendation is also afforded the policy maker as to the areas in the education system mostly needing educational facilities. Plan implementation is an administrative function. This involves the use of the annual budget and the setting up of an organization for the several types of educational projects, and allocation of resources needed for every project. This phase may also include a fourth and essential function of 'plan evaluation'. Plan evaluation may continue throughout the planning circle and it may be performed as the final attestation of a finished project. The different phases in the planning process are not independent of each other but are interlinked. The planning process reflects a cycle with one phase rolling into the next phase. The plan reflecting the aspiration of the nation is initiated through the political function, the technical planner interprets the plan and the plan is implemented through administrative machinery. The evaluation function completes the cycle, the feedback of which forms an input in the new plan.

## **2.3 Importance of Educational Planning**

There are many benefits of effective planning of education to the country. Effective educational planning will help to achieve effective implementation of educational programme. Apkan, (2014)



submitted that our educational system is faced with scarce human and materials resources. Optimal utilization of these scarce resources calls for effective planning. Proper planning saves time, energy and resources and enhances successful implementation of education plan and attainment of educational goals and objectives. It brings about effectiveness in the execution of educational activities, actions and programmes as well as promotes high productivity of educational personnel. According to Ukeje in Akpan (2000), careful planning reduces the number of emergencies as these are anticipated in time and taken care of. Good planning therefore, avoid decision random for all decisions are carefully related into a coordinated whole. Effective educational planning will help to give direction to the education for total development. Educational planning specifies the goals, values and practices and gives the direction for future educational development of a country. It also specifies and sets a limit to a course of action related to education in a country (Apkan, 2014, Adepoju, 2000).

Effective educational planning will capture the information and communication technologies into the educational system to help in the delivery of fast, quality and effective educational services in all educational institutions. The impact of information and communication technology which has turn the entire world into a global village calls for the restructuring and effective planning of education in order to equip learners with current scientific and technological development all over the world. These will make our graduates to acquire scientific and technological knowledge that can make them to be global citizens that can compete globally (Apkan, 2014).

Noun (2012) outlined the following as reasons for educational 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 programmes, 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.

## 2.4 Coverage of Educational Planning

There are many factors determines the effectiveness of educational planning and some of the factors include; the attitude of the political office holder toward educational planning, the funds available for planning of education, the planning tools available, the number of educational professional planner, the level of capacity development for educational planners and political stability. Educational planning covers planning of the early child education, basic education, junior secondary education, senior secondary education and the higher education. Education planning also plan for special education, gender education, mass education, adult education and science education etc.

Educational planning covers the sub-component of the educational system like manpower planning, school plant planning, infrastructural facilities planning, academic planning, lesson planning, financial planning for schools etc. Noun (2012) observed that the coverage of educational planning includes:

(i) Finance:- Educational planning is interested in the judicious use of funds allocated to education. It plans for revenue, handles costing and budgeting in education.

(ii) Personnel:- The adequacy in quantity and quality, training, the specialization, the trend in growth overtime constitute the part of education planning coverage.

(iii) Physical Resources:- The provision in quantity and quality of facilities, their utilization, their distribution and the general plant planning is within the ambit of educational planning.

(iv) Programmes and Services:- The organization, the patterns of activities and development overtime.

(v) Aims and Objectives:- The formulation, the expectations and aspirations, the expected outputs are parts of educational planning interests.

(vi) Alternative Decisions:- The preparation, which enables policy makers to make rational choices is an integral part of educational planning coverage.

## 3.0 Method

This study used a quantitative research approach that employed systematic literature review-based method. Literature search method were adopted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (Adnyana, 2023; Paulus et al., 2023).



#### **4.0 Result and Discussion of problems militating Against Educational Planning in Nigeria**

##### ***Poor funding***

Inadequate funding of educational planning in Nigeria is a big problem preventing effective planning of education in Nigeria. Funding for educational planning is from the general fund of education. The budgetary allocation for the educational sector is inadequate and this is affecting the programme of other subsector in the Ministry of education. Ololube, (2013) observed 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. Under-funding 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 programmes.

##### ***Inadequate Data for Planning***

One of the major function of education administration is planning of educational programme and projects. Planning is very vital to the realization of the objectives of secondary school education. Educational institutions must be planned in order to attain to its objectives. Data is what is needed to plan and take decisions. Data is very important for planning educational programme. Without current educational data, planning is impossible. It is very sad to realize that current data on various forms of education in Nigeria is not available. It was challenging to obtain 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. The assessment was also limited by the reluctance of government officials to release data or respond to surveys and inquiries despite several follow-up visits, contacts and reminders (NEEDS, 2014). Access to reliable and complete information on education in Nigeria has for a long time proved difficult. The development of a national database for education statistics has been slow and various data generating agencies (including the Federal Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Commission, National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics) often used different sample designs, methods of data collection, analysis and reporting, different modes of disaggregation and definitions of indicators. The absence of rudimentary data at school and local level in many areas is often viewed as a crisis, inhibiting the development of effective education planning, monitoring, programming and policy-making (British Council, 2014). Inadequate data for effective planning is one of the major problem facing the administration of secondary school education in Nigeria.



### ***Constraints of skilled Personnel***

Lack of sufficiently well trained personnel in the planning units of the Ministries of Education is another problem. These 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 lack of specialist such as educational planners, statisticians, programmers, and analysts, 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 (NOUN, 2012).

### ***Political problem***

This refers to the effect of the use of power, influence and authority by the government of the day, especially in the allocation of resources. Legislature has a direct influence on the planning processes as the body responsible for policy formulation on educational development. Generally, the legislature is compelled to serve the interest of other special interest groups. There is therefore the possibility of conflicts between legislature and the rational ideas proposed by the technical planners which has been based on statistical analysis of the education system. The legislature represents the government; the technical planner is responsible for analysis of the education system, making available projection for enrolment, physical facilities, funds and personnel required for an educational project.

### ***Constraints of Inadequate Planning Tools***

Another important constraint 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 programmes on policies that are not clear to them or that may be difficult for them to justify (NOUN, 2012).

### ***Constraints of Implementation***

In addition most of the planners, are not given enough freedom to implement their plans. In most cases, the process of plan implementation is carried out by people who did not participate in planning the programmes. Consequently it becomes extremely difficult for the planner to successfully evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the plans in order to determine



areas that require modification. This is one of the crucial reasons why some educational programmes in the country are not successfully or fully implemented. Apart from the problems discussed, educational planning in the country is also obstructed by lack of goodwill of the people and inadequate support given by the government to educational plans. Generally, the citizens of the country considering educational programme as mainly government responsibilities. As a result they show little interest or no attention later even after a lot of resources have been spent on them (NOUN, 2012).

### ***Administrative Bottleneck***

This can otherwise be called bureaucracy or red tapism. It is a process of delaying and ensuring that protocols are followed in the process of educational plans formulation and implementation. Administrative bottlenecks involve stage-by-stage processing of educational plans, which will take several weeks, months, and even years, before such educational plan is finally approved. The bottleneck is usually found with the government machinery as found in ministries in which jobs pass from one stage to another, and from one officer to another. In the process of such plan moving from one stage or officer to another, such officer might be transferred to another ministry. The new personnel that takes over such office where the educational plan requires attention will need some time to study the document before taking the necessary action. These are some of the reasons why there will be bureaucracy in the process of effective educational planning (NOUN, 2012a).

### ***Inadequate Training***

Another barriers to effective educational planning in Nigeria is poor access to constant training by planners in the various ministries handling educational planning. NOUN (2012a) noted that the problem of poor planning serve as barrier to effective educational planning is inadequate training for both the planners and the decision makers. The inadequacy of training stems from the non-availability of the training school in which both the planners and decision makers can get enrolled and benefit from such school. Even, in cases where the training can be held outside the country, there might not be enough monetary resources allocated for such training. Government needs to embrace training of her personnel as she (government) stands the chance of benefiting maximally from the beneficiaries of such training on planning of educational programmes.

### ***Poor forecasting***

Educational planning need forecasting to address issues in educational problems but the inability to predict the forecasting well by educational planners is a very big problem. Akpan, (2014) observed that the educational planners in Nigeria sometimes underestimate the cost of education as a result of poor forecasting of students' enrolment. For example the cost of UPE scheme in Eastern Nigeria in 1957 was greatly underestimated. This gave rise to poor implementation of the scheme. The number of pupils enrolled in the scheme was greater than the estimated figure. There were no classrooms for pupils to learn and the new schools established were not enough to



accommodate the increase in pupils' enrolment. The government needed more funds for administration of the programme. All these happened because of poor prediction by educational planners. The same thing happened in 1976 when the federal government of Nigeria launched the universal free primary education.

### ***Gap between planners and the implementers***

The problem of gap between planners and implementer of educational planning policies is another challenge to effective educational planning in Nigeria. NOUN (2012a) observed that what is affecting educational planning is the gap between planners and the implementers. So far the gap is still wide between the planners and the implementers, it will continue to serve as a barrier to successful educational planning. But in cases where such gap has been closed, and both the planners and implementers work hand-in-hand, progress, improvement, success will continually be experienced. There will be positive progress report and mountains of problems and difficulties will be surmounted. On the whole, there is the need to ensure that the wide gap between the planners and implementers is closed so as to prevent further barrier to educational planning.

### ***Lack of planning tools and facilities***

Both educational planners and implementers do not have adequate tools and facilities to carry out their functions. Some of these tools and facilities may include computers, office space, writing material etc. The lack of these things makes them to be handicapped in the discharge of their duties (Akpan, 2014). The lack of planning tools and facilities in Nigeria has been identified as a major problem that is hindering effective educational planning in the country. This issue has been further exacerbated by the rapid growth of the educational sector and the increasing demand for quality education. Without proper planning tools and facilities in place, it is difficult for educational planners to accurately assess the needs and resources available, resulting in ineffective and inefficient planning processes. This ultimately affects the overall quality and effectiveness of the education system in Nigeria.

### ***Corruption***

Corruption have penetrated the ministry of education. Funds made available for planning purposes have been diverted by officers working in the various agencies and department handling planning of education. Corruption is one of the biggest challenges preventing the effective planning of education in Nigeria. Gbenu, (2012) observed that High level of corruption and wastage of resources in which the limited fund made available is diverted into personal purses and sometimes used for projects not budgeted for. Transparency International says 66 per cent of the money Nigerian governments allocate to education is stolen by corrupt officials. According to the report, corruption is commonplace in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). "This affects education access, quality, inclusion and learning outcomes with devastating consequences, not only for national economic growth but also for the life chances of



children, their families and communities,” the report said. The report highlighted “Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices” as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all the countries (Premiuntimes, 2020).

#### **4.1 Findings**

The paper revealed that poor funding, inadequate data for planning, constraints of skilled personnel, political problem, constraints of inadequate planning tools, constraints of implementation, administrative bottleneck, inadequate training, poor forecasting, gap between planners and the implementers, lack of planning tools and facilities and corruption are the problems militating against educational planning in Nigeria.

#### **4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, the seminal paper identified that poor funding, inadequate data for planning, constraints of skilled personnel, political problem, constraints of inadequate planning tools, constraints of implementation, administrative bottleneck, inadequate training, poor forecasting, gap between planners and the implementers and corruption are the problems militating against educational planning in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the seminal paper recommends that;

1. A careful consideration should be given to the funding of educational planning to enhance quality educational planning in Nigeria. In addition, adequate funds should be made available for the implementation of educational programmes
2. Reliable population census should be conducted regularly in the country to generate new education data.
3. Government should employ adequate educational planners and deploy to ministries and agencies to improve the quality of educational planning in Nigeria
4. A careful consideration should be given to the political setting under which educational plans are made, and political stability should be encouraged in Nigeria, for instance through adequate enlightenment programmes. Efforts should be made by all and sundry to allow democracy to survive in Nigeria.
5. Educational Planner must be provided with necessary equipment tools and materials that are essential for the effective operation. For instance, computers and other gadgets should be provided in the Ministry of Education to enhance the process of planning.
6. The Government should remove every bottle neck that serve as hindrance to effective educational planning in Nigeria.



7. Educational Planning should be left in the hands of trained and skilled personnel. Moreover, more educational planners, statisticians, demographers, and analyst should be trained and better conditions of service offered them to attract them to remain in the Planning Division of the Ministry of Education.
8. Government should create a platform where all stakeholders in educational planning should work together in harmony to prevent gap in planning and implementation.
9. Efforts should be made by planner to expose corruption in the ministries and agencies. Technologies should be deployed to curtail the high rate of corruption.

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