



## **Towards Educational Planning for Social Reconstruction and National Development in Nigeria**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Authors OJ and UU conceptualized and designed the study. Author OJ supervised data collection and authors UG and UU carried out data analysis. Authors UG and UU drafted and finalized the manuscript and extensively reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors contributed to the interpreting study results and writing the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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**Theoretical Analysis**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is theoretical in nature. It examines how education in Nigeria could be used for social reconstruction and national development the concept of educational planning is examined. The essence of educational planning as noted in the paper is to connect education with national development. Phases of educational planning processes and trends in the educational planning in Nigeria were discussed. Approaches to educational planning such as the social demand approach, the manpower approach, the rate of returns approach and the synthetic approach were discussed. The characteristics of the contemporary Nigerian society were highlighted. The challenges to educational planning for social reconstruction and national development in Nigeria were also highlighted. Suggestions on how to plan education in Nigeria for social reconstruction and national

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development were made. It is recommended among other things that, a strong association that could bring pressure on government for effective implementation of educational plans be formed, and that Nigerians should ensure political stability in order to effectively have stable educational policies.

*Keywords: Educational planning; social reconstruction; national development.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Surely, an oil-rich country like Nigeria in which the standard of living of the citizens depreciates daily and sharply like its currency needs to re-examine both its education system and economic policy to see if they are structured to serve society or to destroy its values and very existence. The question then remains whether we can still claim that we are using education as an instrument for social reconstruction since the more education we have, the more society is dismantled and made more difficult to live in. Some critics had queried the often held assumption that there is always a positive correlation between development of the education system and socio-economic national development. Perhaps Nigeria is a good case study to test out the theory and conclude that the quality of the growth of the education sector is probably more important than mere quantitative expansion if the education system is to serve as a vehicle for a social and economic transformation of the nation. This paper therefore examines educational planning in Nigeria and makes a case for national transformation through the instrumentality of education.

## 2. CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Educational planning plays important functions in human collectivities in periods of great social and intellectual ferment to help change a society to fit into new goals. Like in any other sphere, educational planning is looking beyond one's nose to programme and provide for the future in education. In a UNESCO publication captioned "What is Educational Planning?" Educational Planning [1] defined it in its broadcast generic sense as "the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the media and goals of its students and society."

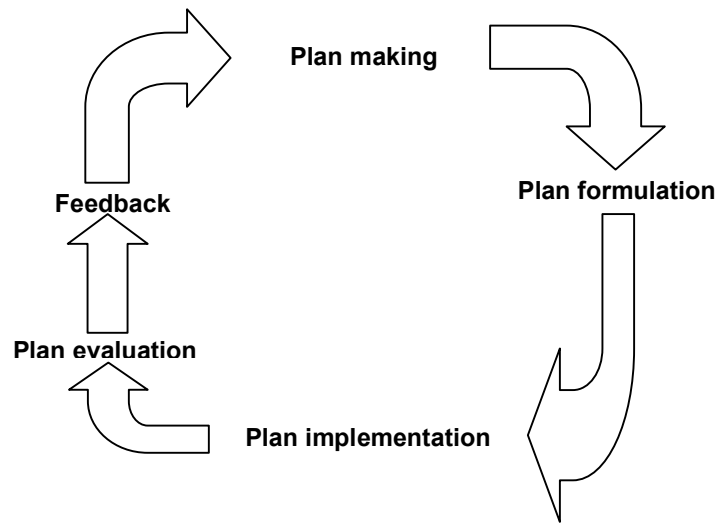
Educational Planning was defined by [2] as a process of preparing a set of decisions about the educational enterprise in such a way that the goals and purposes of education will be sufficiently realized in future with the available resources. Educational planning deals with how to harness the available human and materials resources to achieve educational goals.

According to journal of empirical research [3], educational planning is; an analytical process which encompasses an assessment of the future, the determination of desired objectives in the context of the future, the development of alternative courses of action to achieve such objective and the selection of the most efficient and economical courses or courses of actions from among alternatives bearing in mind possible socio-economic and technological changes in the context of the future. One unique thing about educational planning is its comprehensive consideration of factors. It considers the human resources, materials, managerial input, seeming options and the future relevance of our set goals. It is not short-sighted but peeps into the future, giving a wholistic view of human educational aspirations.

All these definitions explain that educational planning is a tool fashioned to analyze and plan, on a regular basis, the future development of education. It is a continuous process concerned with where to go and how to get there by the best possible route. Educational planning is preoccupied with formulations for the future, but it draws its assumptions from the past. Planning becomes necessary if education must be used to address the challenges of any societies.

## 3. PHASES OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

Planning is cyclic in nature. It is a continuous process. The phases of educational planning process are as follows:



**Fig. 1. Cycle planning process**

Source: Longe, R.S

- a. **Plan Making:** This is the initial stage of the planning process. The stakeholders that are concerned with the plan will express their desires/needs, and their agitation and observation will inform the policy makers on what to do. The issue bothering the entire society could be thrown to the stakeholders in form of public opinions. The response of stakeholders will then give direction to the next phase.
- b. **Plan Formulation:** The opinions expressed in the first phase of the planning process serve as guides to plan formulation. The necessary committee has to be set up where professionals in the field of planning and the education sector brainstorm on the opinions generated. The terms of reference will be provided for the body saddled with the responsibility of drafting the plan. The necessary data are gathered at this stage. The responsibilities of key role players at implementation phase will be highlighted. The envisaged resources needed for the achievement of the plan will also be specified.
- c. **Plan Implementation:** The plan formulated in the second phase is put into action. The task at this stage is more of administrative functions and the organization of resources (both human and material) takes place here. The effective plan made could be a failure if the implementers deviate from the blue-print. If adequate resources are not committed to the plan; the resultant effect could be a school failure.
- d. **Plan Evaluation:** The actions taken so far at the implementation stage is assessed against the objectives or goals of the plan. The strengths of the plan are reviewed, while the major lapses or weaknesses are exposed. The lapses are as well as the strengths are traced to the different key players. The strength are to be improved upon, while the weaknesses are to be rectified.
- e. **Feedback:** This is the phase in the planning process that links the evaluation with plan making. This makes the planning process cyclic in nature. The success recorded at implementation will inform the planners in the beginning of another plan on how to improve on the digital plan, while the failure recorded will assist them to rectify the problems or constraints that resulted in such failure.

#### 4. NEEDS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

The objectives of educational planning are as follows: [4,5],

- i. To establish educational goals, objectives and activities for achieving them.
- ii. To determined space, personnel and materials required to achieve educational goals.

- iii. To harmonize interests and demands of stakeholders (students, parents, employers of labour, governments and institutions of learning) with those of the society in terms of needs, capacity and constraints.
- iv. To collect, collate, analyse and interpret data and information on the educational system.
- v. To ensure adequate investment in education.
- vi. To avoid wastage of resources and enhance internal and external efficiency in the education system.
- vii. To facilitate the production of skilled manpower required by the economy.
- viii. To channel the efforts and activities of the operators of the education system towards the achievement of set educational goals.
- ix. To allocate scarce resources required for education to satisfy as far as possible the various competing demands in a rational manner.
- x. To enhance educational growth and development.

## 5. TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA

The management and control of education in Nigeria can be traced to the period of Arthur Richards Constitution in 1946 which created regional governments for each of the regions of the East, North and West (Federal Ministry of Information, 1975). The first attempts at a co-ordinated centrally planned education system were aimed at considerable increase in primary school enrolment and this was achieved. The planned increase at the secondary level was not attained but much expansion occurred in the teacher training colleges, the technical colleges and the universities. The Nigeria-Biafra civil war seriously affected the implementation of the plan. The Second National Development Plan [1970-1974), came immediately the civil war ended, and during the oil boom years. It was also a period of reconstruction and rehabilitation; there was much expansion of educational facilities, and increase in enrolments at all levels. But the expected national minimum enrolment ratio of 50 percent at the secondary level could not be attained.

The Third National Development Plan (1975 - 1980) witnessed a massive expansion of the education system far beyond the expectations of the planners. The Federal Government introduced the free Universal primary Education

throughout the country in 1976, and in the year, new National Policy on Education was published. The number of universities increased from 6 to 13 and the planned target enrolment of 53,000 for the end of the plan period was exceeded while the enrolment in 1980/81 academic session was 90,751.

The Fourth National Development Plan (1981 - 1985) also saw its educational targets exceeded in spite of many problems during implementation. For example, military coups created uncertainty and instability, while the fall in the price of crude oil in the world market meant serious financial crises for both Federal and State Governments. As a mark of progress in effective educational planning, the Federal and State Ministries of Education have each a department of educational planning. It is the function of the Department to collect and analyse relevant demographic information and data necessary for the effective and efficient organization and management of the education system, including its finding and development of facilities for teaching and learning. New projects and programmes were evaluated by the Department of Educational Planning in terms of cost-benefit analysis for their cost effectiveness. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [6,7], submitted that Nigeria has not, at least in the last two decades, lacked good educational plans or trained educational planners. The country has moved from long plan periods of six or five years in the 1960s and 1970s, to shorter rolling plan of two or three years. In addition, educational planners have been trained for the country by the universities and such international agencies as UNESCO.

## 6. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING APPROACHES

Educational planning is necessary to avert wastages that could occur in the face of scarce resources, for the sake of efficiency. The four major educational planning approaches which have been practiced in Nigeria are as follows:

- i. The social demand approach.
- ii. The manpower forecasting approach.
- iii. The rate of returns approach.
- iv. The synthetic approach.

## 7. THE SOCIAL DEMAND APPROACH

This approach considers education provision from the consumer's point of view. The approach

intends to offer educational opportunity to those who wish to attend schools and who are likely to benefit, and are qualified and able to do so. The political ideology of a particular government determines which of the approaches to adopt. The social demand approach is considered if the government in power believes that citizens of that state or country have to be given the opportunity to satisfy their desire for education. All must be done to provide education for them.

This was practiced in the Western Region in 1955 and 1976 by the Federal Government Universal Primary Education (UPE) and currently being practiced in the Universal Basic Education. When this approach is being adopted, the financial implications are usually ignored, which will eventually lead to the failure of such educational programme. This was experienced in 1976, when UPE was introduced. As a result of poor planning, coupled with shortage of funds, enrolment explosion brought about a lot of obstacles that marred the programme. Shortage of staff, classrooms, teaching facilities, among others, were the resultant effects of lack of due consideration before adopting the approach in 1976. In summary, it is an approach that is based on political criterion.

## **8. THE MANPOWER FORECASTING APPROACH**

This is an educational planning approach that is based on the man power need of a country rather than on political criterion. The planning of education to satisfy the manpower needs of the nation requires that a forecast of the behavior of national economy in the years ahead must be made and related to fee production pattern. The planners should be able to advance means of identifying the type and quantity of educated manpower that the country will require in the future so as to achieve the estimated economic growth target.

## **9. THE RATE OF RETURNS APPROACH**

This approach takes education as Investment good. The rate of returns approach to educational planning takes education to mean the provision of skills and knowledge to the citizens so that the national output of the society may be increased. When this method is adopted, it means that the society should invest in those educational programmes that would substantially

increase the rate of economic growth. Thus, educational investment has to be weighed against or compared with other investments such as roads, communication, health, defence, industry and so on in the nation.

## **10. THE SYNTHETIC (ECLECTIC) APPROACH**

The synthetic or eclectic approach was evolved [8], as the viable option for Nigeria since the indicators were that:

- a. The social demand approach favoured expansion of primary education as demand was highest at the level.
- b. Manpower requirements approach reveals the need to boost secondary technical education to meet up with the requisite population for tertiary technical education.
- c. Rate of returns approach favours the expansion of university education because the social rate of returns at university level is the highest.

The application of the eclectic approach still has secondary technical education as a priority as present. The National Policy on Education provides a stimulus for this approach through the introduction of a subject, Introductory Technology at the Junior Secondary School, with a purely technical senior secondary system.

## **11. CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY**

Before we can determine how education can be successfully used to reconstruct the Nigeria society through proper planning, it is necessary to analyse first the characteristics of the society itself. Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa and one of the leading third world developing nations. An attempt to encapsulate its features in this brief discussion would therefore be a Herculean task.

The approach shall be to select and discuss aspects of the Nigerian society which greatly determine the complexion of the education system and which the latter is in a position to influence radically if properly harnessed to serve as a change and development instrument. The characteristic are discussed below:

- a) **Rising Poverty Profile:** The rising profile of poverty in Nigeria is assuming a worrisome dimension as empirical studies have shown. Nigeria, a sub-Saharan African country, has at least half of its population living in abject poverty [9]. Similarly, the publication of the Federal Office of Statistics [10] revealed that poverty has been massive, pervasive, and engulfs a large proportion of the Nigerian society. In a book [11] stated that the scourge of poverty in Nigeria is an incontrovertible fact, which results in hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, poor access to credit facilities, and low life expectancy as well as a general level of human hopelessness. Also [12] asserted that Nigeria presents a paradox. The country is rich, but the people are poor. As noted by [13], Nigeria is richly endowed and the country's wealth potentials manifest in the forms of natural, geographical, and socioeconomic factors. With this condition, Nigeria should rank among the richest countries of the world that should have no business with extreme poverty. However, authors [14] perspicaciously remarked that Nigeria has witness a monumental increase in the level of poverty. According to them, poverty level stood at 74.2 percent in the year 2000. Looking at the records from the Federal Office of Statistics, [15] revealed that about 15 percent of the population was poor in 1960; the figure rose to 28 percent in 1980 and, 1996, the incidence in Nigeria was 66 percent or 76.6 million people. [15] equally remarked that the UN Human poverty Index, in 1999, placed Nigeria among the 25 poorest nations in the world. According to the [16], the population in poverty is given as 68.7 million, as of 2004. This is a very tragic situation when one considers that fact that Nigeria has had over \$3000 billion in oil and gas revenues since independence [17].
- b. **Complex Population:** By the 2006 Census figures released National Population Commission, there were about 140 million people in Nigeria. About 71 million are males while about 68 million are females. However, also of great interest to us in this discussion is the fact that there are over 250 ethnic groups within the population. The ethnic groups are often classified on linguistic basis, their local histories, customs and tradition. While some ethnic groups have large populations running into millions of people, there are very small ethnic groups with just some thousands of people. Among the dominant large groups are the Hausas, Yorubas, Ibos, Fulanis, Kanuris, Ibibios, Tivs, Ijaws and Edos. The important element here is that there is mistrust and rivalry among the ethnic groups in Nigeria for domination of society, particularly in the vital sectors of politics, the economy, religion and the military forces.
- c. **Rural and Agricultural Society:** Modernization, industrialization and urbanization have brought in their wake in Nigeria a general flow of the population from the rural to the urban centres. There is a maddening and uninformed rush of young people to the cities in search of salaried jobs which actually are not there or which are daily diminishing and becoming more specialized and reserved for the skilled and well educated seekers. This notwithstanding, Nigeria remains basically a rural and agricultural society.
- d. **High level of Illiteracy:** Nigeria has made great advancement in the attempt to popularize education. However, there is no hiding the fact that Nigeria has one of the lowest literacy rates in Africa. Only about 80 per cent of school age children are actually attending school while the majority of the adult populations are illiterate. There is also much wastage in the education system since many children dropout of school without completing primary education or achieving permanent literacy. Education can only begin to serve as a veritable instrument for social reconstruction when the people are available to receive formal or non-formal education of an organized and purposeful nature. Even our adult literacy campaigns had been haphazard and poorly funded and organized.
- e. **Under-Developed Economy:** The Nigeria economy is not only under developed; it has been going through a period of crisis. This has been the result of poor or inadequate economic planning; inefficient management of resources; under-utilization or misuse of trained and skilled manpower; unstable political system; global inflation; heavy international debt burden and other externally imposed

difficulties; and the neglect of agriculture as a major source of food items and raw materials for both local industries and for export. There has been an embarrassing hiatus between education and the economy as each tends to weaken, rather than strengthen, the other. As more people receive education and many specialize, the economy seems to plunge deeper in to a dark abyss and sooner cannot easily recover from the shock of disappointed aspirations and expectations.

f. **Religious Fanaticism in Nigeria:**

Nigerians are a deeply religious people, and this is a good thing since basically all religious teach the virtue of patriotic, tolerance and responsible behaviour. The two dominant religious are Christianity and Islam with some people practicing varieties of traditional religion. The problem, however, is that there are too many over-zealous adherents within the Christian and Muslim communities and their fanaticism has turned religion into a controversial subject in national life. Its impact on the education system has been tremendous right from the introduction of modern education in the country in the nineteenth century.

Education occasionally finds itself in a dilemma in its mission to reconstruct society because of the activities of some religious fanatics who want use the schools to serve the particular sectional or denominational interest of their followers even if provisions of the national constitution and educational policies are contradicted or undermined. Although Nigeria is a secular state and the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it had not been easy or possible for some people, including many teachers in the school system, to draw a clear distinction between the state, the Church, Mosque and the School. Since they see religion as a way of life, they believe that the state and the Schools are coterminous with the Church (or Mosque), hence any education for their children which does not make their religion the pivotal force is rejected.

g. **Political Challenge:** Politics usually provides persons who preside over the formulation and implementation of educational policies in any nation. The statesmanship of these individuals, the stability in governance and, the political

followership, determine to a large extent the conduciveness of educational planning conditions.

Fifty one years after independence, Nigeria still appears to be in the process of working out a peacefully acceptable method of changing its leadership. Over the years, election results are usually greeted with protests and allegations of rigging. The individuals and parties defeated in the polls more often than not, carry the hangover of their political misadventure into the corridors of governance. The government in power is therefore criticized with so much bitterness and denied the peace needed to address its programmes for education and, other sectors of the economy. This apparent lack of the spirit of sportsmanship among Nigerian politicians no doubt makes it difficult if not impossible for government to come up with nationally accepted educational programmes and plans.

## 12. CHALLENGES TO EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, several educational plans that are good have failed because of some factors. Such factors that bring about the weaknesses of Nigerian educational planning are as follows:

- (i) Reluctance of the planners and government to be committed to the educational objectives: The educational goals/objectives are supposed to drive the efforts of both planners and implementers in Nigeria. The experience in the country has shown that both the planners and government are reluctant in their commitment to these objectives. This always leads to misplacement of priority.
- (ii) **Inadequate Resources:** Resources here refer to human, financial and material resources. No matter how sound a plan may be, it is bound to collapse when it is not supported with adequate resources at the implementation stage. The Nigerian experience of 1976 Universal Primary Education is an example. The enrolment figures envisaged was incorrect; the turnout was more than expected. The resultant effects were inadequate classrooms, furniture, teaching staff,

finance, among others. Also, the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) suffers set-backs in the face of inadequacy of resources like furniture, funds, personnel and so on. Government has not been able to meet up with the actual demands in the system.

- (iii) Politics: The political ideology subscribed to by a government in power eventually affects her disposition to the educational sector. Nigeria has been faced with political instability right from the time of independence. The civilian took the baton from colonial administration from 1960 and after six years of governance, it was sacked by the military in 1966. The military ruled from 1966 to 1979. Even with the military, coup d'etat was a barrier to smooth policy. The civilian enjoyed governance from 1979 to 1983, and the government was toppled by the military again. The military reigned from and in 1999 the civilians took over again till 2008. This instability has crippled our educational system seriously. This is because as government changes, the policies change or the personnel meant to implement plans change, which poses a set-back to the realization of set plans.
- (iv) Time constraint: As a result of continuous change in government, the implementers do not have sufficient time to execute expected plans before a reshuffling of the cabinet replaces them with a new set of people.
- (v) Poor monitoring and evaluation system: Adequate monitoring ensures effectiveness in the execution of already made plans. Most of our educational plans in Nigeria enjoy little or no monitoring and evaluation. When plans are assessed at implementation stage, it exposes lapses, thereby giving room for further development or improvement. The 6-3-3-4 system of education has not achieved what it is expected to achieve, because the problems militating against its effectiveness have not been diagnosed officially for adequate attention.

### **13. PLANNING EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The fact remains that the whole essence of educational planning is to connect education with national development. If education in Nigeria

should contribute to social reconstruction and national development, the following suggestions are to be considered [18].

- i. Educational planners in Nigeria should plan for effective introduction of entrepreneurship education at all levels of our education system. Entrepreneurship education can go a long way in making the recipient self-reliant and as well reduce the incidence of poverty.
- ii. Government should be more committed in funding education in Nigeria. Lack of proper funding leaves the plan on paper, while adequate funding translates the plan into reality.
- iii. Government should be more willing to execute educational plans. An unexecuted educational plan cannot have any impact on the people. Another aspect of this point is the need for culture of continuity in policy implementation. Government in power should not abandon good educational programme based on political considerations but should encourage it in order to actualize the desired goals.
- iv. Educational planners should see how the large population of the country can be harnessed for national development.
- v. Educational planning should ensure effective citizenship education in order to engender tolerance instead of mistrust and rivalry among ethnic and religious groups in the country.
- vi. Education should be planned in such a way that it can encourage the youths to remain in their localities and as well contribute meaningfully to national development instead of drifting to cities to search for a non-existing job. Thus, there should be plans to make agriculture more attractive.
- vii. There should be more concrete plans to actualize the ERA (Education for All) goals in Nigeria.
- viii. Educational planning in the country should focus more on making education more responsive to the needs and aspirations of Nigeria (i.e. peculiarities of the country).

### **14. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper posits that clear and purposeful educational policy is indispensable to educational planning. It also argued that the National Policy on Education as presently found has not provided clear directive that enables educational



planners in Nigeria to comprehend in specific terms, objectives education is expected to achieve, in order to use remove education as an instrument for social reconstruction and national development.

In conclusion, educational planners in Nigeria should start their job with a bold attempt at clarifying the policy provisions through informed policy analysis. This may equip them to itemize activities in the field of education which when carried out will lead to national development.

Political instability is yet to be laid to rest in Nigeria. The world economic order and its negative tilt to developing nations and the poor and slow evolutionary development of democracy in Nigeria are incontrovertible exhibits. The educational planner will continue to be faced with new educational policies that come with new and frequently changed governments. A good grasp of modern knowledge, techniques, skills and attitude, would be great assets in handling the new governments as they come and go.

In addition to considering the suggestions stated above, the following recommendations are made:

- a. There should be a strong association of educational planners which could bring pressure to bear on governments at all levels to reduce incidents of underemployment, through political appointments and other cases of poor personnel management in the field of educational planning.
- b. Educational planning in Nigeria should be based on reliable data. Nigeria had planned without data in the past. The resultant plans left much to be desired.
- c. The government also has a role to play. Two major ones include:
  - i. Preparation of Teachers in Quality and Quantity: Quality teachers are required for quality education. Therefore, for Nigeria to achieve the expected objectives, teacher-training institutions have to be strengthened. In, addition, the institutions have to be conversant with the quality of teachers required to realize educational policy objectives.
  - ii. Political Stability: Politics determines the direction of an educational system. Incessant change in government does not favour the achievement of

educational objectives. This calls for political stability and stable educational policies.

## DECLARATION

Some part of this manuscript was previously presented in the following conference:

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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