



EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA DURING COVID-19: PROBLEMS AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Educational planning is the foundation of education. The development of education depend on effective planning. Educational planning is a continuous process and it covers all aspects of education. The COVID-19 outbreak disrupted the activities of educational planning in Nigeria. This article is aimed to discuss how COVID-19 clock down affected the planning of education in Nigeria. The researchers used secondary data sourced from both print materials and online to support some of the points raised in the article. The COVID-19 lockdown affected the educational planning in Nigeria in the following ways: suspension of implementation of planned programme, suspension of school planning, suspension of lesson planning at school level and suspension of data collection for educational planning. To prepare for the future and to ensure that even in the mist of pandemic planning of education continues, this article hereby suggests the following: Educational planners in all ministries and agencies of education should be train on how to use ICT facilities to carry out planning functions and ICT facilities should be provided for all the educational planners in the country e.tc.

Keyword: COVID-19, Educational, Planning, Problems Challenges.

Introduction

On 27 February, Nigeria confirmed its first case in Lagos State, an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25 February from Milan, Italy through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, fell ill on 26 February and was transferred to Lagos State Biosecurity Facilities for isolation and testing (Ogunode (2020; Jegede 2020). Aiyedun, & Ogunode, (2020) observed that in order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sonny Echono, told reporters on 19 March that the directive was part of the country's overall strategy to contain the spread of the virus. Ogunode, Ahaotu & Ayisa (2021) submitted that Nigeria joins the growing list of countries in Africa which have closed schools and universities. Ogunode (2020);



Aiyedun, & Ogunode, (2020), and Ogunode, Ahaotu & Ayisa (2021) submitted that the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 affected all educational system of many countries. Education as a system is made up some other sub-system like educational planning, educational administration, educational management, educational financing, curriculum development etc. Educational planning is one of the component that is very important to educational development and implementation. Educational planning is the key to the realization of educational objectives. Educational planning is the foundation of the educational system. The success of education depend on the effective planning. Educational planning is a continuous programme that ensures that educational policies and programmes are designed to meet up with the various changes occurring in the educational system. The planning of education in Nigeria was disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper is aimed to discuss the educational planning during COVID-19: Problems and way forward.

Concept of COVID-19

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to people. SARS, for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans while MERS moved to humans from a type of camel. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. The name coronavirus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, the looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona. The novel coronavirus, identified by Chinese authorities on January 7 and since named SARS-CoV-2, is a new strain that had not been previously identified in humans (Ogunode 2020, Olatunde-Aiyedun, Ogunode & Eyiolorunse-Aiyedun, 2021, Ogunode, Ahaotu & Ayisa 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in 2019 in China has affected the world economy. Zethembe (2020) observes that the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic outbreak affected various sectors of the economy and every single aspect of human life, not only in developing countries but across the world (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020; Raaper & Brown, 2020; Wargadinata et al., 2020). Coke-Hamilton (2020) and Ogunode (2020b) observe that the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to curtail its spread are taking a heavy toll on the educational sector.

Concept of Educational Planning

Planning is considered as a process of thinking which refers to many possible alternatives of action which are likely to achieve the goals of a programme, institution or organisation. It has to choose or decide the best alternative of future action in relation to both the goals and available resources. Philip (undated) view planning as the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future and directed towards realizing some goals by the best possible means. Hence the essence of planning is the assessment of as many operational alternatives as possible and then selecting the best for launching action. Planning is regarded as the process of setting out in advance a pattern of action to bring about overall national policies by the closest possible articulation of means and ends (Hugman and Schwartz



undated).” There is a relationship between planning and education. Education must be planned for its to achieved it objectives. Education not planned is meant to fail.

Diksha, (Undated) observed that planning is essential in the field of education entitled as “Educational Planning” which is a major requirement in the contemporary society. The complexities of the present scientifically developed and technologically advanced society have given special position to the need for planning in education. Like planning in any field, educational planning has to explore the best possible means of making the greatest use of available resources leading to the maximum realization of the educational aims and objectives, both individual and social. Educational planning may be defined as a systematic design of action for realization of educational aims and objectives for individual and social development through maximum utilization of available resources. In practical perspective, educational planning is defined as a process utilized by an administrator while performing the role of a leader, decision-maker, change agent and so on. Ogunode et al (2021) submitted that Educational planning is the act of outlining the future objectives, programme and activities of education and identifying the means to achieving them. Educational planning is the process of drawing out the vision, goals and programme of education and defining the various ways of realizing them within the set time.

Importance of Educational Planning

The following are the importance of educational planning according to Diksha, (Undated):

1. To make every programme of an educational institution or organisation grand success.
2. Proper educational planning saves time, effort and money as planning in every field is a time-saving, an effort-saving and a money-saving activity.
3. Educational planning is a sound method of solving educational problems by avoiding the trial and error method of doing things.
4. Educational planning is essential for the best utilization of available resources.
5. Educational planning checks wastage and failure and contributes to the smoothness, ease and efficiency of the administrative process in the field of education.
6. Through proper planning in education, education can be the best means by which society will preserve and develop its future value system, way of life of an individual, knowledge, skills and applications, and culture of the country.
7. Through proper educational planning, the means and ends of the society can be properly interacted through educational system. It implies that the educational system utilizes a large proportion of the country’s educated talents and a major part of public expenditure.
8. Educational planning is highly essential for preparing a blueprint or plan of action for every programme of an educational institution or organisation.
9. Planning in education is necessary for making one’s educational journey goal-oriented and purposeful.
10. It is essential to maintain, sustain and enhance the thinking process of an individual, institution or organisation.



11. Planning in education is necessary to highlight the universal aims of education required for every nation for its development in every respect.
12. To bring total development of a nation in time, in which educational development is one among its various aspects.
13. To reflect the modern developments like explosion of knowledge, advancement of science and technology, development of research and innovation while reformulating the aims and objectives of education in the light of the particular situation a country is facing.
14. It explores and provides the best possible means of making the wide use of available resources leading to maximum realization of the educational goals.
15. Educational planning facilitates gathering of educational experts, teachers, supervisors and administrators for taking decision in relation to the realization of purposes of educational programme (Diksha, Undated).

Types of Educational Planning

Diksha, (Undated) listed the following are the different types of educational planning:

1. Administrative Planning:

Administrative planning refers to planning in administrative perspective. In the field of education, administrative planning relates to distribution of responsibilities and powers for different levels of education. In administrative educational planning, the administrative responsibilities and powers are phase-wise planned in relation to the level of different educational administrators.

This planning of education makes a detail plan on structure and organization of education at different levels – primary, secondary, higher secondary, higher – general, technical and professional. This planning prepares planning on duration of an educational programme, organisation and co-ordination of educational programmes, financial allocation or budget for the programme, engagement of educational officials in the programme, and smooth management of the programme etc. (Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021).

2. Academic or Curricular Planning:

This type of educational planning refers to planning for smooth academic transaction of the syllabus for any course at any level of education. It encompasses planning on education in relation to needs and demands of the individual and society. Formulation of educational goals, formation of curriculum committee for development of curriculum and selection of appropriate strategies and methods of teaching, planning of content units, planning for evaluation, planning for review of the curriculum, planning for use of library, planning for special provision for the gifted and remedial instruction for slow learners etc.



3. Co-curricular Planning:

This planning of education is necessary for bringing total development of a student in one point and total development of an educational institution or organisation in another point. This planning includes planning for student welfare services, planning for sports and games, planning for social activities and programmes, planning for cultural activities and programmes, planning for hobbies etc.

4. Instructional Planning:

This sort of planning in education is macro-level in nature as it deals with planning in classroom situation in relation to a particular topic of a concerned subject. This planning refers to emotional and organisational climate of the classroom. It includes planning for specification or instructional objectives, selection and organisation of learning activities, selection of appropriate means for presentation of learning experiences, monitoring of the learning or instructional progress, selection of suitable evaluation techniques for learning outcomes etc. (Olatunde-Aiyedun, Eyiolorunse-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021).

5. Institutional Planning:

This type of educational planning gives a practical shape to the meaning of educational planning. In this context educational planning refers to the needs and requirements of every institution to be achieved through creation and maintenance of a planning atmosphere in the institution.

Although institutional planning includes all types of planning cited above by focusing on curricular and co-curricular planning, but there is the need of having a discussion on institutional planning. This situation occurs because of two basic purposes. Such as-to give a practical meaning, shape and form to educational planning and to start educational planning at the grass-root level (Diksha, Undated).

Educational planning in Nigeria

Educational planning in Nigeria is done by the federal, states government and local government in agreement with various stakeholders in the educational system under the leadership of the Federal minister of education for national planning. The state government is saddled with the responsibilities of planning on how the national plan document will be implemented in their state while the local government authority also plans the implementation of the national plan document in the various local government councils (Ogunode et al 2021).

Educational planning is done at the federal, states, local government and at the individual educational institutions. Educational planning is a continuous programme in the educational institutions. Educational planning is aimed at ensuring effective implementation of educational programme; to reduce wastage in the educational administration; to ensure effective allocation of resources; to ensure quality education, to ensure educational policies achieve its objectives and to avoid mismanagement of educational resources (Ogunode et al., 2021).



Educational planning is the key to the realization of educational objectives. Educational planning is the critical to the development of education. Educational planning is the bedrock upon which education depends to actualize its programme. Effective planning of education leads to effective implementation and failure to plan education leads to poor implementation. The development of educational system depends on the effective planning.

Ogunode et al (2021) opined that Educational planning covers early child education, primary school education, junior secondary school education, secondary school education, higher education, special needs education, mass education, women education, Girl child education, adult education and Gender education. Educational planning also focuses on manpower planning, plant planning, infrastructural facilities planning, student planning, curriculum planning, human resource planning and instructional materials planning.

Educational planning is a continuous programme that must be done to improve the educational standard and quality. Educational planning is done in all educational institutions especially the schools. Educational planners and administrators are saddled with the responsibilities of carrying out national planning of education. The school administrators at the various educational institutions are to carry out the functions of planning for their institutions. Professional teachers are to write out the lesson plan for their lessons (Ogunode & Aiyedun, 2020).

Educational Planning Process in Nigeria

Ogunode (2021) quoted in Noun (2009) stated that educational Planning in Nigeria is undertaken as a part of the overall national planning. This implies that the planning units in the Ministries of Education are expected to work closely with the Ministry of National Planning that is charged with the responsibility of producing overall economic development plans for the country. Therefore educational planning in Nigeria is done within the framework of the national goals. As a result, the process of educational planning in the country starts with the formulation of national policies and goals. Such policies that are related to education are initiated by the policy makers or the ruling political body, often in line with the ideology of the government in power. For instance the President, or a State House of Assembly might decide, as a matter of policy, that agricultural education should be given priority in the country or a given state respectively.

Directives related to such policies are handed down to the Federal (or State) Ministry of Education for necessary action. The officials in the Ministry of Education then examine such policies and restructure them so that they can constitute operational objectives within the context of education. Plans are programmes that could help to attain these policies are then worked out essentially in the planning units of the Ministries of Education. The implications of such plans in terms of the required resources for their implementation are also stated. The proposals drawn up in the Ministry of Education are then sent back to the appropriate body such as the National or the State's Executive Council for their consideration and approval. This means that the plans are finally approved by the government and an appropriate legislation is passed on them in terms of edicts or decrees. (Ogunode, 2021; Noun 2009)



Once the educational plan is approved by government, the Ministry of Education is confronted with the task of implementation. With long-term plans for instance, the ten-year development plan progress reports are often given periodically. Such reports are expected to reflect the extent to which the targets of the plan have been attained. The Ministries of Education in the States develop their educational plans as is done in the Federal Ministry of Education. It is then expected that educational planning in the States will reflect the overall national goals and objectives of education. It is for this reason that the Federal Ministry of Education sometime coordinates the educational plans of the States to arrive at the National Educational Plans. (Ogunode, 2021, Noun 2009).

The function of educational planning include school planning, financial planning, facilities planning, student academic planning, lesson planning, infrastructural facilities planning, manpower planning, curriculum planning, instructional resources planning, school programme planning, human development programme planning and instructional planning.

Educational Planning During COVID-19

The COVID-19 clock down affected the educational planning in Nigeria in the following ways: it led to; suspension of implementation of planned programme, suspension of school planning, suspension of lesson planning at school level and suspension of data collection for educational planning.

2.1 Suspension of Implementation of Planned Programme

In order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria, the Federal government directed all institutions which included educational institutions in charge of planning education in the country and in various states in Nigeria to shut down. This directive affected the implementation of the various educational planned programme scheduled for implementation across the country. The outbreak of the COVID-19 led to the suspension of these important programme that is meant to improve the quality of education in the country. Many strategic action plans on reduction of illiteracy, Girl-child education strategic plan action and conferences and human capital development programme designed to improve the educational planning programmes in Nigeria by international organization were also affected by the closure order of the federal government of Nigeria (Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021).

2.2 Suspension of School Planning

Educational planning takes different forms. There is micro-planning, macro-planning, school planning, lesson planning, financial planning e.tc.. All these plans take place in educational institutions. The administrators in the federal, states ministries of education and other chief executive are saddled with the responsibilities of drawing the planning for the implementation national programme at the various school level. At the primary schools, they are known as the headmaster/mistress and assistant headmaster/mistress, while at the secondary school level, they are known as the principals and the vice principals so also at the teacher's training and technical colleges. Both the assistant head teacher/mistress and vice/deputy principals assist the school head in executing the enormous administrative tasks. At the higher institutions, for example, colleges of education, polytechnics, and



universities. They are known as Provost at the College of Education, Rectors at the Polytechnic, and Vice-Chancellors at the Universities. Planning of the school work is one of the coordinational function because planning is vital to the realization of educational objectives. The outbreak of the COVID-19 which led to the directive that all educational institutions should be shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19 affected all these school administrators to carry out the schools' plan for the various programme of the schools. Ogunode et al (2021) did a study and the result obtained shows that Covid-19 have affected educational planning in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, planning hours were affected as a result of early closure of educational institutions across the Nation, majority of planners in Nigeria lack e-planning facilities to enable planners interact with their colleagues and continue with planning processes during COVID-19 clock down

2.3 Suspension of Lesson Planning

One of the basic function of a professional teacher is lesson note planning. The teachers are trained to write a lesson plan for every lesson in the school. Lesson plan writing is basically for teachers in early child education, basic schools, junior secondary school, senior secondary schools and other related educational institutions. The function was suspended during the COVID-19 school clock in many public educational institutions. The COVID-19 school closure affected all the teachers in public and some private schools and the function of writing lesson plan to present your lesson was suspended since no teaching and learning was taking place in many educational institutions where no provision for online classes.

2.4 Suspension of Data Collection

The COVID-19 institutional clock down across the country during the pandemic of COVID-19 affected the activities of data collection officers and planners who need the data constantly to plan the entire education. Data collection officers and educational planners cannot travel to collect data. Inadequate statistics do result into wrong planning. In other words, if poor data are used to plan for the future, a wrong result will emerge. Unfortunately, this has always been the case in most developing nations. Noun (2011) observed that Data and information are very strategic to educational planning. Information is the aggregation of processed data to provide intelligence or knowledge. Information is generated by matching relevant data elements to the variables of problem. It will not be an overstatement to say that planning cannot be done without data and information. Such data and information could be qualitative or quantitative. According to Stevenson, Bowers and Morton (1978) information might be conceived as opportunistic data, data awaiting a sensitive, competent decision maker's skillful honing into a useful format. The competent and skillful persons to use relevant data and information efficiently for educational management are the educational planners. Without data and efficient information management system, he or she may not be effective at making right projections for the future needs and aspirations of the educational system. Any planner that worth his or her name should know that timely and accurate information is a key component of his or her planning responsibilities. Educational planning requires constant data and information regarding



student data, student enrolment, students' graduation, students' performance, teachers' gaps, infrastructural facilities information, instructional materials etc. All these information and data were not able to be generated during the clock down and this affected the planning of education because planning is a continuous programme and data is needed to plan. Ogunode et al (2021) conducted a research and discovered that educational data on schools were unable to be accessed as a result of close down caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

Way Forward

To prepare for the future and to ensure that even in the mist of pandemic planning of education continues, this article hereby suggests the following:

1. ICT Training

Educational planners in all ministries and agencies of education should be train on how to use ICT facilities to carry out planning functions

2. Provision of ICT Infrastructural Facilities

The government should provide modern ICT facilities to all educational planners working in various ministries and agencies of government to allow them carry out their planning function vis online platform in case of future pandemic.

Conclusion

Educational planning is the key to the realization of educational objectives. Educational planning is the foundation of the educational system. The success of education depend on the effective planning. Educational planning is a continuous programme to ensure that educational policies and programmes are designed to meet up with the various changes occurring in the educational system. The outbreak of COVID-19 in China that spread to more than two hundred countries across the World including Nigeria affected the activities of educational planning in Nigeria. This article identified that COVID-19 affected planning of education in Nigeria. The pandemic led to suspension of implementation of planned programme, suspension of school planning, suspension of lesson planning at school level and suspension of data collection for educational planning. To prepare for the future and to ensure that even in the mist of pandemic planning of education continues, this article hereby suggests the following: Educational planners in all ministries and agencies of education should be train on how to use ICT facilities to carry out planning functions and ICT facilities should be provided for all the educational planners in the country e.t.c.

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