

Re-Engineering Educational Management for Quality Education in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Considering the invaluable roles and contributions of education to meaningful individual, social and national development, nobody will argue the fact that its proper management and administration by competent leaders should be a national concern. Education is generally regarded in Edo State as a major component of development hence, the need for its constant re-examination. This paper examines the present condition of education in the State and noted that its dwindling quality as depicted by poor pupil achievements in basic skills and public examinations is inimical to her progress and development. It attributed the situation to several factors such as poor quality and quantity of teachers, inadequate planning, poor school administration poor funding by all stakeholders, more especially the lack of appropriate management policies by Government that could engender and inspire healthy competition for better performance among schools. There is therefore a need for a re-engineering of educational management in the State to bring about stronger accountability and motivation among school management. The state government should adopt strategic planning with statements of vision and mission backed by policies on acceptable standard in learning and teaching methods as well as the environment.

Keyword

Education, Management, National Development, Policies and Re-engineering

I. Introduction

Educational reforms are not strange as no educational system is perfect. All over the world, education continues to be subjected to questions like: what should be taught? Why? Where? How? By whom? Education is meant to serve the world. The world, itself, is not static. How can education be static if it is to remain relevant? Political will is the key to success in all educational endeavours. (Obanya, 2002 [1]).

The World Bank [2], (1999) explains that a single most important key to development and poverty alleviation is education. It is therefore essential for any nation that is interested in development to improve on the management of its educational system.

Schools are saddled with the onerous responsibility of preparing the youth for useful life in all its ramifications through appropriate implementation of the school curricula. Education is an investment in human capital, which, if properly managed, provides a granite-solid foundation for national development.

Education is a social institution created by man to satisfy his social needs (Aboho, Tsue, and Maduwesi, 2007 [3]). Education can be regarded as a component of development, and indeed a major one. There are a lot of problems facing the educational system in Edo State.

In the spate of its existence as a state its educational system has been subjected to evaluations and reforms. A number of commissions, conferences and meetings have been put in place to examine the state's educational system (Gusau, 2008 [4]). Since the introduction of western education into Nigeria, the educational system has been facing a lot of problems such as inadequate funding, inadequate manpower and inconsistent in government policy.

The various Governments have made series of omissions and commissions which have continued to cripple the educational system, and reforms have been patchy, inconsistent, mismanaged and therefore mostly ineffective. The system failed largely at the level of management. There is no gainsaying the fact that no educational system can rise above the quality of its management.

Aguh (2007 [5]) observed that there are generally decay in our institutions of higher learning which are characterized by indiscipline, immorality, truancy, violence, drug abuse, cult activities, various forms of examination malpractice etc. Nigerian graduates' employers complain that graduates are poorly prepared for work.

Education is not a way to escape poverty but a way of fighting it. The role of education in poverty eradication, in close co-operation with other social sectors, is crucial. No country has achieved meaningful development without education. Not only is education important in reducing poverty, it is also a key to wealth creation.

All stakeholders in the education sub-sector must task themselves to ensure that the products from their investment are of a higher quality. It is distressing to read reports of the hooliganism and sundry criminal conduct masquerading as cultism in some of our schools. University students who are highway robbers cannot be a pride to us. Students and pupils who are so lacking in the knowledge of civics cannot be a pride to us. Stakeholders must, therefore, strive for that education which will provide desirable development for the survival and growth of the individual and society.

II. The Importance of Education

The fundamental purpose of education is to create good human beings. Education is vital to the healthy growth and development of one's personality. Education serves as the means to bring about the desired change in society, to develop a generation of virtuous individuals and thus contribute to the development of good human beings. The fundamental purpose of education is to gain knowledge, inculcate the forms of proper conduct and acquire technical competency. Education serves as the means to develop oneself physically, mentally and socially. Education has an immense impact on the human society. One can safely assume that a person is not in the proper sense till he is educated. It trains the human mind to think and take the right decision. In other words, man becomes a rational animal when he is educated.

The World Bank (1999 [2]) explains that a single most important key to development and poverty alleviation is education. The ultimate aim of educational management is to procure and manage resources (man, money, materials and time) to ensure the achievement of educational goals and objectives. All management functions such as planning, organizing, leading, supervising, controlling and motivating are directed towards achieving such objectives. The ultimate aim of education is to bring out the best in each individual for his/her benefit and that of the society.

Education is an investment against poverty. It is not just the Government that is under-investing in education; parents, teachers, and students are equally guilty in various ways. Nwagwu (1976

[6]) describes the importance of education to human development as follows: today, education is universally accepted as a form of investment in human beings, which yields economic benefits or returns and contribute to a nation's future wealth and development by increasing the productive capacity of citizens.

The importance of education cannot be neglected by any nation. And in today's world, the role of education has become even more vital. It is an absolute necessity for economic and social development of any nation. The dividend of education can only be achieved if there is good quality education. The present state of education in Edo state hardly merits this description. Education without quality is no education, it is a destroyer and a betrayal of trust.

III. Goals of Education in Nigeria

Fafunwa (1975 [7]) identified the seven cardinal goals of traditional African education to be the following:

1. To develop the child's latent physical skills.
2. To develop character.
3. To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority.
4. To develop intellectual skills.
5. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs.
7. To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

These cardinal goals of traditional education in Africa also apply to Nigeria being an integral part of Africa. This prepares the individual for self reliance, political and economic stability. What is required is focus, sincerity of purpose and an acute desire to make life better for the people, and to make education more meaningful.

The problems facing education in Edo State include among others: inadequate funding, poor funding arrangement, weak human resources, unreliable data for planning, lack of synergy between education and labour, and absence of established quality control in the education sector. This paper will highlight some of them and also make the necessary recommendations.

The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Achebe, 1983 [8]). To carry out any educational reform, an accurate assessment of the present situation must be done. This paper will examine "where we are" and "where we ought to be" in Edo State as far as the educational management is concerned, and make appropriate recommendations.

IV. Where We Are

Edo State, created on 27th of August 1991 by the then Military President General Ibrahim Babagida can be regarded as a replica of Nigeria with several ethnic groups occupying both rural and urban settlements ([Online] Available: <http://www.edostate.gov.ng> [9]). There are many primary and secondary, six technical Colleges, two Colleges of Education, two Polytechnics and four Universities to manage. The problems with the educational system in Edo State include among others:

A. Planning

This involves the collection of data and systematic analysis for the purpose of appropriate decision making. Educational planning

in Edo State has not been helpful in promoting quality education. Due to poor planning and implementation, the system has no clear cut direction.

B. Supervision and Inspection

Supervision is an age-long device for improving teachers' knowledge and skills. It focuses on the teaching/learning process for the purpose of ensuring the achievement of educational goals and objectives while school inspection is used as a quality control strategy for assessing the progress of the school. In Edo State, these two important instruments of school improvement are no longer effectively utilized.

C. Parents

They occupy important position in the quality process. Many parents are shirking their responsibilities in this regard. They send children to school without the necessary text books and writing materials. Many parents do not pay school fees or levies regularly. Many do not bother to find out what their children do in school or how they behave until it is too late.

D. Quantity and Quality of Teachers

By far, the most serious factors eroding quality in the educational system are the quantity and quality of the teachers. The educational system suffers from both. Teachers are considered as the most important factor in student learning. Their deficiencies either in knowledge, pedagogical skills or motivation affect the educational system negatively.

E. Government Policy

Educational management can also be affected by government policy such as inadequate motivation of teachers by the government and poor funding of schools as well as recruitment policy where merit is not taken into consideration. All these when not properly handled will affect educational management negatively.

F. School Administration

Educational administration involves the operational aspect of educational management. It ensures the achievement of educational goals and objectives through "careful utilization of the available limited resources" (Peretomade, 1995 [10]). Some of its activities are planning, organizing, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, controlling, reporting, motivating, evaluating and supervising. First, it should be appreciated that Nigerian school administrators at all levels are operating under a very harsh environment. They have to grapple with the problems of inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, poorly motivated teachers and students, uncooperative parents and the likes.

G. Funding

One of the major problems of education delivery in Edo State is inadequate funding. Ukeje (2002 [11]) outlines the following as the major sources of funds for running schools: government allocation, education tax fund, fees, private sector contributions, and funds from alumni and scholarships for brilliant and/or poor students. These funds are not adequately provided and effectively utilized.

H. Poor Quality Education

One of the major problems facing the State today is poor quality education. The indicators are quite visible: woeful performance in National Common Entrance Examinations, School Certificate

Examinations and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in most subjects, especially in Sciences, English and Mathematics. Many who passed may have been aided through examination malpractice in one form or the other. Many students now migrate to rural schools for opportunity to cheat. The primary level as a foundation is very weak and creates problems for the upper levels. Ineffective teaching is the major factor responsible for this. Quality in education is considered multi-dimensional, involving: the community, parents, teachers, students, school administrators, government, curriculum, funds and infrastructure (Obanya, 2002 [1]).

I. Students Secret Cults

Student secret cults have a pronounced effect on the educational management since it normally results to students' unrest in campus. A secret cult is an association like every other, with hierarchy, ranks, a governing body, and a head or leader, but it is secretive in its activities. Its members may be students who seek initiation, with others who are influenced or even coerced into becoming members. Members may be usually enticed with benefits, such as payment of school fees, protection from aggression, popularity and good grades while in school. Unfortunately, most of these promised privileges will never come their way.

V. Where We Ought to be

To start with, Edo State must have a dream and work toward achieving it. Education must take the people out of poverty. It must produce job creators, and not just job seekers. It must produce upright citizens. In short, Edo State must have a vision and a mission to guide all stakeholders in education. Teachers, school administrators, students and everybody in the State must strive to contribute positively to its proper management.

In order to use knowledge for high purposes and effective management people need (1) deep understanding, and (2) critical perspective. Deep understanding means that you have taken the time to examine a subject in depth, you have looked at it from many points of view, you have seen how it can be applied across a wide variety of contexts, you have questioned its basic assumptions and identified the limitations of what is thought to be known. You can find ways to bring it to bear on other people's problems and issues, in collaborations.

Critical perspective means that you think about a subject in relation to basic values and not just in relation to matters of fact or explanatory adequacy. It means not just that you question whether something is so, but also ask how particular knowledge functions to make the world a better place or a worse place, a more or a less just place. It means thinking not just about the subject, but about why that subject is studied, and why it was studied in the past, by whom, and how it contributes value and for whom. What values it contributes to and what values it may detract from. Bezzina (2002 [12]) buttressed the fact that the strategic plan poses more challenges to educational leaders to strengthen their team management for effective implementation. Therefore, team management is imperative in the administration of educational institutions. However, building such a team requires knowledge and skills for its formation, workings and maintenance in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The present Oshiomole administration is committed not only to restoring our educational system, but also to ensuring that it ranks among the best in the country. The State will not only take the various reforms in education serious, but also institute new ones in response to emerging challenges. The old saying that "it takes a village to

raise a child" remains true even in our global village. We cannot delegate education entirely to a small number of specialists and expect it to work. Every member of society, old and young, must take some responsibility for educating others.

VI. Conclusion

In summary, this presentation examined the problems facing education in Edo State. It re-emphasized the importance of education to poverty alleviation and as an investment for national development. It was noted that most of the problems of education in the State border on deficiencies in management policies, especially the failure of Government to provide necessary policies as guidelines to regulate teachers' and students' behaviours.

VII. Recommendations

In the light of the above, the following recommendations are made for Government to consider for a radical re-engineering of educational management in the State:

1. Government should adopt a systematic approach to educational management through strategic planning.
2. Education policy on academic standard in all subjects particularly in English and Mathematics should be put in place.
3. Automatic promotion in schools should be discouraged.
4. Inspectorate Division should be strengthened with well trained staff, and be better funded to avoid corruption and ensure effectiveness.
5. Government, religious bodies and the PTAs should leave no stone untouched to rescue these precious children from cultism. What the cultists need, mainly is help to get them out of the trap, and not mere condemnation.
6. Government should partner with private investors to fund structural facilities and assist with the funding of research and development works along predetermined line of interest and to promote breakthroughs and scholastic exploits.

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