

Abstract

The lack of a critical ideology for educational planning in Nigeria can be attributed to the consistent use of education to sustain the social structure, federal structures and its operation, and inadequate projection of future circumstances. To overcome this, the process of systematic forward planning, whereby education is conceptualised as a system process orientation is advocated through the transmission of desirable values.

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An Ideology of Educational Planning in Nigeria

The Theoretical Scheme for Planning

A careful analysis of the ideological undertone of educational planning in Nigeria reveals the need to relate present practices to the evolution and development of the values, principles and purposes of contemporary society. By this, the political ideologies and the changing systems of socio-economic development in the country become the main determinants of the objectives and goals of the educational system. This is to say that, as a matter of praxis, educational planning assumes the arduous responsibility of devising systematic programmes and assembling these through activities and experiences to develop in recipients a form of comprehensive satisfaction both from the intrinsic perspective and the provision of extrinsic benefits for the purpose of living.

Since the expectations are multifarious and the processes intricate, educational planning must evolve from the society to understand their genesis and thereby cement the education-society gap by ensuring the transformation of the environment through school processes. Once this crucial criterion is satisfied, the planner can then adopt conventional or systematic forward planning as a tool for the translation of the ideological foundation of the nation into reality. Basically this revolves around six highly-related stages of (1) problem survey and deliberation ; (2) goal definition and delineation; (3) programme planning and design; (4) programme provision, implementation and supervision; (5) programme study and evaluation, and finally (6) programme regeneration and recycling.

In a nutshell, problem survey and deliberation utilises the principle of democracy in the planning of educational facilities. In this process, individuals, agents, laymen, various groups and organizations, and indeed a cross-section of the citizenry, are involved deliberately or spontaneously on the basis of their experiences. Thus, contribution at this stage may not necessarily be contingent on expertise and training, hence the usefulness of this stage lies in the ability of the educational planner, through sample survey and fieldwork to collate problems and reservations of the society as revealed in people's reaction to, and deliberations on, the prevailing scheme of things.

Having defined the problem, new goals are delineated to overcome past limitations and build on a sound ideological foundation for the future. Again these goals could be jointly derived from public opinion, media feedback and/or expert consultation. However, for results to be worthwhile, expert consultancy cannot be temporary in function and *ad hoc* in terms of programme implemen-

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tation. It is from here that most of the problems of the Nigerian system evolve for there is lack of specialised consultancy services all through the planning and implementation cycle, as is the case for physical projects in the economic development sector. Just as it is crucial to have expert consultation in stage three or programmes planning and design, so also it is imperative for expert advice, counsel and involvement in every stage of the educational development programme.

The Guiding Ideology in Planning

The issue that naturally arises from the foregoing discussion of the operational and theoretical foundation of educational planning in a society like Nigeria, is to highlight the types of ideology that influence and/or should influence the educational planner in trying to re-shape the educational system to be of beneficial value to posterity. This has become necessary because one should be able to define the ideology of a nation from the system of education of its citizens. Any system that cannot guarantee this is grossly handicapped and contributes immensely to the opposite praxis of deschooling. Although the issue involved is a hydra-headed one that begs many questions, especially in a situation as amorphous as that of Nigeria, the Federal Government has been aware that a nation's policy of education cannot be "formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and objectives of the Nation".¹ In other words, the philosophy and ideology of contemporary society must be transmitted by its schools, no matter how ambiguous this may be. This is the challenge of the planner.

In realisation of the needs for a form of transmission, the educational programmes of the Third National Development (1975-80) period were founded with the purpose of achieving the five main national objectives as enunciated in the National Policy of Education of 1977. To achieve these aspirations, despite their vagueness in terms of purposefulness and evaluation, a national policy of education meant to engender (i) "the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, and (ii) equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nations at all levels and types of education" was adopted.² Furthermore, to operationalize this policy in schools, all educational institutions were expected to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.

A careful examination of these prescriptions shows that no policy position can be more abstract and unattainable than the one propagated in the National Policy on Education and the Third National Development Plan.³ The rationale for this summation is examined from a multi-dimensional consideration. First, the stipulated national policy on education lacks strong foundation, for it is not based on any critical, national philosophy or ideology as Nduka has adequately pointed out, rather it is based as usual on tradition of the inviolability of what is traditional and customary.⁴ This should not be, for one should question traditional values in order to be able to integrate them into the national educational programmes for which an appropriate philosophy is sought.⁵ In fact it was after more than a century of western based education in Nigeria and a further period of nine years of independence that an attempt was made to define some ideals and objectives for Nigerian education in the National curriculum conference of 1969. As a result of this lack of a national critical direction, both the state and federal governments operate without any form of unanimity and uniformity in terms of strategies and modalities for achievement, as the democratic political process showed between 1979 and 1983. Thus a central educational policy or philosophy is prescribed whereas states have their legal and constitutional responsibility to direct their educational programmes according to their wishes and political inclination. It is no wonder, therefore, that this scheme only worked for a while during the era of military centralism, to be left in near

tatters and shambles by the resuscitated federalism of the second republic.

A second area of concern, as pointed out earlier, is the tendency of sticking to the outmoded practice of restricting expert advice and consultancy services to the initial stages of the planning process. This expertise should be employed in all six stages of the cyclic planning process to make the intentions of defined programmes attainable. It is no use engaging one expert for design, another for implementation and yet a third for programme evaluation and regeneration. Rather the consultants that undertake to define the problems, goals and programmes, should see to the supervision of their provision for effective implementation. Furthermore, the evaluation of programmes is done by the same group of experts through a critical analysis of on-going projects in relation to similar types in other areas to evolve a flawless regeneration for the future. The essence of this scheme cannot be over-estimated for the supervision and evaluation of programmes, designed by a different group of consultants, is inevitably tied down in obvious and insurmountable difficulties. This is so because it is the original designer that knows best the rationale for any course of action advanced in the plan of implementation. Besides, in most cases and as a result of the present practice, original designers are not readily available to fire back or define their position when the supervising consultant expresses reservation at the stages of implementation and evaluation.

A third factor which readily comes to mind is the problem of inadequate funds to retain these services all through the process. This hinges on the need to equally cater for other competing sectors of the economy, an issue further worsened by the oil glut which Nigeria is still battling to overcome as a nation. However, the fact that some other consultants come into the scene much later, especially when programmes appear to be failing, makes the current practice even more expensive than the system advocated in this paper.

A fourth consideration is the lack of in-built devices for unexpected changes or what Dalin describes as the tendency for the government to take for granted strategies for educational change.⁷ The experiences of the explosive UPE enrolments are still fresh in the memory of Nigerians. Furthermore the proliferation of universities and other institutions of higher learning in order to satisfy geo-political balancing and aspirations, and hence cope with unexpected changes in enrolment admission practice, can be put down to a very shallow perception on the part of the government functionary.⁸ Faced with no long-term programme of massive expansion for the older institutions, all that governments resorted to was to adopt a panic measure by establishing new institutions here and there when the resources for their funding are not available.

Closely related to the fourth problem is the tendency in the national policy of education to maintain the social structure and thus use education as a medium for domination instead of development. In the Nigeria context, this attitude is exemplified by the domination of the rest of the society by the thoughts and policies of the educated elite. Because the majority of the people are illiterates, the educated few feel secure to dictate the policies that govern the practices of the masses. This is done by exploiting the privileged position acquired after successfully relegating the illiterates to a class which is neither their creation nor choice. Often in such societies as in Nigeria, the national policy produces two systems of education in order to succeed in the complete relegation of a section of the society. To achieve this, legal prescription becomes utopian and ideal, and by a system of practice founded on the exigency of the status quo, poor pupils are abandoned in poor village schools in system one, while children of the educated elite and the rich are uplifted into system two as exemplified by the Federal Government Colleges and other well-equipped secondary schools. This dichotomy continues right to the higher educational level

whereby the disadvantaged lot spend more time and energy to secure a place in the elite institutions at this level. Often, because of their restricted educational opportunities at the first two levels, descendants of the illiterate culture end up in non-competitive courses at a much older age than their privileged counterparts. This form of classification and domination of a citizenry is complete when the educated elite combine forces with the political leadership to become the neo-colonizers, comfortably placed at the upper levels of the domestic pyramidal structure, while the illiterates, the colonized, remain at the bottom of the ladder.

Rationale for a Planning Ideology

It is this problem of relegation that leads to a class system of education, a situation akin to conditions in the north-eastern states of the United States in the late nineteenth century whereby education became "a vehicle for the efforts of one class to 'civilize' another and thereby ensure that society would remain tolerable, orderly and safe".⁹ Faced with such embarrassing circumstances, the Nigerian government often resorts to establishing "free public schools" that make poverty a precondition for attendance; and as result the wealthy and the educated elite refuse to patronise such institutions. The solution to the problem therefore does not lie in popularizing second-rate facilities but enlarging the catchment area of the standard, good schools to cover all facets of the society. This, of course, cannot be done by destroying the good schools but by establishing more of them for the benefit of all in the society, with in-built mechanism for the elimination of the obstacles that had prevented the majority from enjoying these facilities. This calls for a deliberate policy of positive discrimination in favour of the poor as the bedrock of the Nigerian national educational policy.¹⁰ It is by so doing that the majority, who contribute to the national development effort, will be liberated from the shackles of the domestic pyramidal structure, masterminded and perpetuated by the political leadership and the educated elite.¹¹ To shy away from this is to locally foster the awful situation in Latin American whereby the educational system was used as a major instrument for the maintenance of the "culture of silence" which meant to bring about conformity of the younger generation with the logic of the present system.¹²

Essentially, positive discrimination entails a complete rationalisation of the present system by providing (a) equal access to existing (good) facilities through the elimination of prevailing obstacles; (b) equal access backed by better facilities for the poor; (c) equal attainment levels for both categories through a complete rehabilitation of hitherto poor schools through more funding to bring them to the same level of achievement. This calls for a new national policy.

However, a major issue that strikes one's imagination over this development is whether one can talk of a new policy of educational planning in Nigeria when there is no critical, national (political) philosophy or ideology. This constraint similarly led to the reservation expressed by Peters on whether there is "any justification for the discussion of aims of education when we do not hear about aims of politics".¹³ In any case, as Durkheim concluded, "for a people to feel at any given moment the need to change its educational system (through planning) it is necessary that new ideas and needs have emerged for which the old system is no longer adequate".¹⁴ These new ideas, values, principles, policies and needs form a substantial dimension of a nation's educational policy or ideology. Whether or not these have been categorized and grouped under ideological labels does not prevent their transmission through the educational system.

Thus the situation in Nigeria is that these values are known and some people in fact aspire to them while others do not, but no single terminology or ideology has been found suitable to describe them. With due regard to this, the planning process should ensure the transmission of

what is desirable and dynamic in these values; and broadly these can be grouped into:

- (a) economic values,
- (b) political values,
- (c) social-cultural values,
- (d) religious values,
- (e) scientific and educational values,
- (f) attainment values or processes of achieving these dynamic values.

Since the definition of what constitute desirable values in these spheres of life lies within the provinces of specialists in these areas, the educational planner must not attempt to be a "Jack-of-all trades, while being master of none". As such, while the educational planner is at the helm of affairs in the planning team, experts in other related sectors should contribute towards the delineation of what is desirable in their areas of operation. These should then be collated by the team to form the foundation of what societal values the educational system should transmit. To be conclusive in such tasks one cannot but agree with Iheoma that such values, and ideals which are to be projected, must be tested through experience to establish their authenticity for the wider society to emulate.¹⁵ First, the lack of unanimity only poses problems because of the present stage of development in Nigeria. In advanced countries, such a situation is considered as competition or acquisition of development on the basis of one's efforts or capability.

However, this can be tolerated if a national base line or minimum level of development has been achieved educationally. The situation in the developing countries, and indeed Nigeria, is different. To guarantee the required minimum, legislative action is needed on a policy that will ensure a new initiative in favour of less-advantaged areas. This does not connote stagnation for the relatively advanced areas for, in addition to maintaining the standard already acquired, efforts are geared towards the achievement of marginal improvement over and above present provision.

On the question of funding, there is need for a national reorganization of priorities to accord education the rightful place it deserves because of the pivotal role it plays in the process of the nation's development. Similarly, there is need for a complete reorientation on how best to utilise public funds in a judicious manner in order to achieve the purpose for which they are allocated. As a result, the propensity towards investment by educational institutions, which has been very low, should be encouraged so that profits from such sources can be ploughed in as a means of subsidy to government allocation. In view of this, the basic principles through which such a scheme could be successfully implemented should be fully incorporated by the planner as integral aspects of the school curriculum.

Lastly, the issue of ambiguity of goals is highly related to inadequate foresight, on the part of government agencies, of future development, circumstances and change. Ambiguity can be reduced to the barest minimum if one realises that expectations are closely tied to changing circumstances hence the evolving educational policy must be cognizant of this. To do this, the planning process must ensure an ideology that recognises education as a "system process orientation" whereby the interconnectivity between education and other spheres of life, as already implied in the definition of desirable values, is clearly laid out for pupils to comprehend.¹⁶ Thus, in this process, schooling or the process of education is seen as:

- (i) involving political economic and social interest,
- (ii) an evolving product of federal, state and local government interest,

- (iii) an organ of conflict or competition over values,
- (iv) an organ of skill development for the security of individuals,
- (v) an organ for the harmonization of human relations with organizational structure and goals
- (vi) an organ of change through institutional linkage, conflicts and survival.¹⁷

In conclusion, it must be realised that the necessity for an ideology of educational planning emerges from the need for a purpose-oriented education that will lead to the academic satisfaction of individuals but at the same time generate the utilitarian potentials of individuals for the benefit of society. Perhaps, it is when this has been achieved that one can rightly say, in the present developing setting of Nigeria, that education is actually for development.

NOTES

1. Federal Government of Nigeria, *National Policy on Education* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, 1977), p.4.
2. Federal Government of Nigeria, 1977. Developments have since revealed the unequal opportunities in state schools and those provided by individuals and organizations.
3. Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Third National Development Plan - Volume I* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Economic Development-Central Planning Office, 1975).
4. A. Otonti Nduka, "African Traditional Systems of Thought and Their Implications for Nigerian Education", *West African Journal of Education*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2 (June, 1974).
5. J.D. Okoh, "The Role of Traditional African Value Theory in Education", *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (April, 1982).
6. A. Adaralegbe (ed.) *A Philosophy of Nigerian Education* (Ibaden: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972).
7. P. Dalin, *Limits to Educational Change* (London: Macmillan, 1978).
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10. O'Donoghue, *Economic Dimensions in Education* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971).
11. M. Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Longman, 1974).
12. P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970).
13. R.S. Peters, "Aims of Education - A Conceptual Inquiry", in *The Philosophy of Education*, ed. R.S. Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
14. E. Durkheim, "On Education and Society", in *Power and Ideology in Education*, ed. J. Kerabel and A.H. Halsey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). This article is made up of excerpts from E. Durkheim, *Le Evolution Pedagogique en France*.
15. E.O. Iheoma, "The Function of Aims and Values in the Pragmatic Theory of Ethics", *Nigerian Journal of Educational Philosophy*
16. Dalin, p. 9.
17. Dalin, pp. 9-10.