PLANNING: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR CURBING WASTAGE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERRIA

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Abstract

This paper highlighted the place of planning as a veritable tool in curbing wastages in secondary education in Nigeria. Within the framework of efforts and strategies towards curbing wastages in Nigerian secondary schools, planning is increasingly accepted as an important tool. Despite the efforts of the government and school management to curb wastages in secondary schools in Nigeria, the trend seems to be increasing resulting in high rate of school dropouts, repetition rates and unemployment among others. This paper reviewed the concept and forms of wastages, causes of wastages and the place of planning in reducing wastages. It is believed that effective planning on the efficient use of educational resources will go a long way towards curbing the increasing wastage rate in secondary schools in Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that there should be a periodic assessment plan to determine the needs of secondary education with a view to eliminating wastages due to repetition and dropout.

Keywords: Planning, Wastages, Repetition**.**

Introduction

Education is a route to achieving self-reliance and national development in any nation including Nigeria. The education sector has remained a medium through which positive transformation can be achieved in the society. Glennrester, Kremer, Mbiti and Takavarasha (2011) considered education as one of the most promising paths for individuals to realize better and more productive lives and as one of the drivers of national economic development. This is why the government at all levels has adopted education as an instrument for poverty alleviation and for the benefits of the masses (Etuk, Ering & Ajake, 2012). Nigeria has three levels of education: primary level, secondary level and tertiary level. Primary education is education given to the pupils between the ages of 6-11 years; secondary education for children between the ages of 11 and 16 years while tertiary education is the education given to students after the completion of secondary education. Secondary education the focus of this paper is the education given to children after the completion of primary education. It lasts for a period of six years. The secondary education has specific objectives which it is intended to achieve. These according to the National Policy on Education include the following:

1. to provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with opportunities for education of a higher quality irrespective of sex or social. religious and ethnic background
2. to diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by open and to students after their secondary course
3. to equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology;
4. to develop and project Nigerian culture, arts and languages as well as the world's cultural heritage;
5. to raise a generation of people which can think for themselves, respect the view and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor and appreciate those values specified under our broad national and live as good citizens;
6. to foster Nigerian unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite in diversity;
7. to inspire students with desires for achievement and self-improvement both at school and later in life (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2013).

The level of performance of secondary education can only be measured in terms of its achievement of the stated objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. Regrettably, recent occurrences have shown that there are certain levels of inefficiency in the secondary education in Nigeria. Many of our students at the secondary school level are dropping out from the system, the repetition rate is increasing on daily basis. There seems to be a gap between what is expected and the final output of the system as many secondary school leavers are roaming the streets unable to find befitting jobs. The few that manage to find a job have to be subjected to remedial courses to bridge the knowledge gap.

Worse still, many of our human and material resources in the secondary schools are not optimally utilized. Many equipment and other material resources are lying waste. All these are tantamount to wastages in the educational system and truncate the achievement of the well-articulated aims and objectives of secondary education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. From the foregoing one may begin to wonder the place of planning in curbing the menace of wastages in secondary education in Nigeria. It was against this backdrop that this paper became eminent.

Wastages in Education

Wastage is an economic term which is used in the field of education to describe various aspects of failures that occur in the education system and which militate against the achievement of education objectives. This is in tandem with Babalola (2004) that the term 'wastage 'is applied to education as unfamiliar ring and educationists may object to it as a depersonalizing of what is essentially an individual

growth process. This agrees with Idowu (2002) who defined educational wastages as the inefficient use of education resources: teachers, labour school building and equipment. This occurs when an investment preparation (in education) does not produce either its desired or anticipated results or produces result at a scale, considerably lower than it has set for itself. When material resources including time are not used for their purposes, then such resources can be said to have been wasted. According to Derbe, Endale and Ashebir (2015), educational wastage occurs when educational objectives are not realized. They noted that wastage in education indicates inefficiency of the educational system since an education system is efficient when such system tries to reduce wastage to the barest minimum. This corroborates Durosaro (2012) that the concept of efficiency refers to the capacity of the educational system to turn out graduates with minimal wastage. The writers conceived wastage in education as the inefficient use of educational resources (human and material) which jeopardize the achievement of the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria.

Wastage in education can be manifested in a situation whereby the number of pupils/students who enrolled in a particular level of education fail to complete the duration of the study and as a result failed to transit to the next level of education either by dropping out or repeating a particular level of education. This is in agreement with Durosaro (2012) who posited that some of the signs of wastage in education include dropouts, repeaters, premature withdrawals, misguided types of education, non-employment of school leavers and brain drain. Furthermore, it is in tandem with Ajayi and Mbah (2008) who posited that the problem of wastage in education arises in many developing nations as a result of high percentages of students who repeat classes and those who drop out of school. The above assertion entails that wastages occurs in two distinct ways: repetition and dropout. This agrees with the assertion of Derbe, Endale and Ashebir (2015) that repetition and dropout rates are commonly used parameters of measuring educational wastage of any education system. Many factors could be responsible for such wastages in education, Adigwe (1997) lamented poor conditions of secondary schools which include poor teaching, poor motivation of teachers, lack of facilities and equipment. According to Adigwe, these poor conditions have culminated into inefficiency in the system resulting to students dropping out and repeating classes. Any system of education experiencing high dropout and repetition rates is wasteful because those students who dropped out have not gained a lot and have consumed resources that would have been used by other students.

Repetition

Repetition is a condition where a student undertakes the same course(s) or class(es) he/she has done previously, which could be as a result of many factors. According to Derbe, Endale and Ashebir (2015), repeating a grade means utilising more resources than allocated to a student and hindering the intake capacity of schools. This means that class repetition will affect the number of students that

would have been admitted into the school, increases the number of students in the class and necessitates the need to increase resources available for the class. Supporting this, Ige (2015) affirmed that pupils/students that repeat class take up space, teaching time, textbooks and other resources that could be devoted to new students/pupils. This agrees with Ajayi (2007) who maintained that a high level of students' academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classroom, libraries, technical workshop and laboratories are inadequate. Repetition depletes the limited resources available to schools and adversely affects the productivity of the teaching personnel as it increases the class size. Commenting on the reasons for repetition, Haidany (2013) noted that poverty, low quality of schooling, security problems and local traditions are responsible for repetition.

High rate of repetition among secondary school students could be as a result of peer group, low socio-economic status of parents resulting in parents' inability to provide the necessary materials that will enable the students perform well in their examinations. Most times, students repeat a particular class not because they fail examination, but because they were not able to pay their school fees and a result were not allowed to take part in examinations. Repetition should be tackled through proper planning by the various stakeholders (government, school and families) in the education industry because if left unchecked may led to more wastages such as high dropout rate in the system.

Drop Out

Dropping out is a situation where students prematurely withdraw from school without completing their course or duration of education. This could be as a result of repeated failure, long absence from school or inability to meet the required needs of education. To buttress this, Jayeeta (2015) asserted that majority of parents in rural areas have very low income which is often insufficient to meet the educational needs of their children; and some students often withdraw from school in order to help the family in doing some works and seeking employment among others. Jayeeta further stated that in some schools, students go to school on bare foot and their uniforms are tattered. This agrees with Ahmed (2003) who stated that in most secondary schools in the country, teaching and learning take place under non conducive environment lacking the basic materials, thus hindering the fulfillment of educational objectives. This kind of situation makes students lose interest in education and sometimes they prematurely drop out of school. Derbe, Endale and Ashebir (2015) noted that leaving school (dropping out) before completing a particular cycle/level of education is wastage in resources, number of graduates and students years.

Students may dropout from school as a result of parents' inability to continue to cater for their children in providing instructional materials and payment of necessary fees, unwanted pregnancy, and peer influence among others. Therefore there is the need

for proper planning by stakeholders to ensure that wastage as a result of students dropping out of school for one reason or the other is reduced to the barest minimum.

Types of Wastage in Education

Basically there are two types of wastages in education: material wastage and human resource wastage, (Odu, 2013).

Material Wastages

Material wastage occurs when materials meant for education are not optimally utilized for the purpose of education. Odu (2013) maintained that material wastage is concerned with underutilization of tools and equipment on a particular task or operation for a given job. Further, Odu stressed that wastage entails damages or destruction of equipment or use of wrong tools for right job and vice versa. These materials are very necessary for effective instructional delivery in education. These materials in most cases may or may not be available for use; and in most cases when these materials are available, it may not be adequate, it will likely have effect on teaching and learning process and constitute an element of wastage, since the expected learning outcome, objectives and goals may not be achieved in education (Usen, Udofia & Offiong, 2012).

Human Resource Wastages

This is a situation whereby the professional expertise of the personnel in education is not optimally maximized. Human wastage occurs when educational personnel are assigned other responsibilities other than their specialties. Buttressing this, Odu (2013) conceived it as the underutilization of personnel in handling education. This is a situation where professionals with requisite skills in certain areas are not allowed to function in their areas of specialization, but are rather given administrative functions. Supporting this, Usen. Udofia and Offiong (2012) asserted that it is sheer waste of skills where an engineer is appointed to head the Ministry of Health rather than Ministry of Works and Housing. In the same view, a specialist in mathematics should be assigned to teach mathematics in order to ensure effectiveness and total instructional delivery. However, this is not always so, as there are situations where the available skilled manpower is not given the opportunity to apply the skills fully in their area of specialty for intellectual development of the learners' interest which could possibly affect the interest of the learner and apparently leads to failure, repetition and perhaps dropping out of the school. Corroborating this view are the findings of Akolo (1998) and Gbadamosi (2014) who confirmed that the root cause of failure in secondary schools is a fall-out of inadequately trained teachers and non- provision of the needed instructional materials which consequently contribute to the apparent poor students' academic performance and thereby reducing graduation rates in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Causes of Wastage in Education

Several factors have been identified as causes of wastage in education. Derbe, Endale and Ashebir (2015) categorized these causes into three; namely:

1. Students Related factors
2. Teacher related factors
3. School related factors

Student Related Factors: these include; failure to study hard, lack of interest in education, low future success expectation, frequent absenteeism, health problems, self conception due to previous failure in examination.

Teacher Related Factors: these include; lack of encouragement to students from teachers, assignment of less experienced teachers, assignment of less qualified teachers, professionally disappointed teachers

School Related Factors: these include; distance from home to school, lack of school facility, learning in overcrowded classrooms among others. These causes include;

1. Poverty
2. Lack of school fees and money for other school requirements
3. Need to improve grades/performance
4. Pregnancy
5. Sickness
6. School location/distances
7. Truancy/indiscipline
8. Drugs
9. Peer pressure
10. Lack of family support

Furthermore, the causes of wastages in education as conceptualized by the writers include; the nature of the process and the nature of the output.

Students as one of the basic inputs to the education system can cause wastages in the education system. The nature of the students admitted in the school to a very high extent will determine the rate of wastages in that particular system. If the school admits students that of high quality through subjecting them to a thorough entrance examination, it will help to minimize repetition that arises as a result of students failing examinations because the school ensured that the students are of the right quality at the point of entry.

Furthermore, the educational process can cause wastages in education. When the school administration fails to get the process right by ensuring that teachers are discharging their duties religiously, being in class when they are supposed to be in

class, prepare their lesson plan, teach according to plan, give and mark assignments among others. The principals should ensure that the process is right by discharging their supervisory roles judiciously. The nature of the output also causes wastages in education basically because of the input nature because the input to an extent will determine the output. Wastages in education connotes when a school leaver is unable to find a job probably for the fact that they are unable to meet the job requirements of the employer. Most of the school leavers may not update or upgrade their knowledge most especially in this ICT era in order to bridge the knowledge gap.

From all indications, wastage threatens the internal and external efficiency of the educational system and is a stumbling block to the attainment of goals and objectives of the schools. Therefore there is the need for proper planning to be put in place by the government, educational institutions, households and indeed all stakeholders towards curbing the high rate of wastages in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Planning as a Veritable Tool for Curbing Wastages in Secondary Schools

Planning is a process that involves a deliberate, systematic, rational and continuous determination of course of action that is aimed at optimizing the use of limited organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals. Given the importance of secondary education, it follows that improved secondary education is fundamental to the creation of effective human capital in any country.

It has been a parlance that, failure to plan is planning to fail. This presupposes that every success achieved is an outcome of a good plan (Nwogbo, 2014). Therefore, to avoid wastages, that is to make efficient use of both human and material resources in the secondary level of education, there is need for proper planning. Planning therefore is an indispensable tool towards curbing wastages in education. Planning can curb wastages in education through the following ways:

1. **Planning determines the objectives and goals of the educational system and devices means of achieving them**: Nwogbo (2014) observed that all organizations (including education) are set up to achieve different purposes or objectives which guarantee their survival and continued existence. Education cannot achieve its stated objectives without planning. Planning is the best step toward the achievement of organizational goals. For organizational goals to be achieved, there must be effective utilization of resources through proper planning. This means that for secondary education system to achieve its objectives, resources must be effectively utilized, and for that to happen, it must be carefully planned. If the limited resources are not planned, they may end up being wasted. Therefore, planning needs to be effectively carried out to determine the goals and objectives of the education system and also device means to achieve the goals of education as stated. Without proper planning in

this respect, wastages is bound to occur in the system because when purpose is not known, then abuse (wastages) becomes inevitable.

2. **Planning Enhances Division of Labour and Specialization**: Akuegwu and Uchendu (2016) affirmed that planning involves determining what to teach, who teach it, how to teach it and what is required to teach it. This entails that the curriculum must be stated, those teaching it must be placed according to their specialties, the processes or procedures for teaching must carefully follow the best practices of teaching and the facilities, instructional materials etc., provided for it. These ensure that material and human resources needed in the school are optimally utilized for the purpose of education. This will eliminate the underutilization of personnel in handling education; a situation where professionals with requisite skills in certain areas are not allowed to function in their areas of specialization, but are rather given administrative functions (Odu, 2013).

3. **Planning in Education Helps to Ensure the Quality and Type of Education Provided Meets the Demands of the Society**: Proper planning will help to ensure that the type of education provided for the population is such that will meet the demands of that society. This planning will achieve through the manpower forecasting approach by providing education in those areas where it is needed. This will helping in curbing wastages (most especially external wastages) among school leavers as the type and quality of education received will be such that will help him or her to secure a gainful employment.

4. **Carrying Capacity**: Planning ensures that students' enrolment does not exceed the carrying capacity and resource available to secondary education. When the education facilities are provided to meet the number of students in schools, there will be efficiency in the system. Efficient utilization of resources eliminates wastages.

5. **Planning Enhances Teaching and Learning Process**: when what to teach, who to teach it how to teach it are carefully planned to meet the varying learning needs of different learners in the schools, a high level of students' academic performance will be guaranteed as well as eliminate wastage due to repetition.

Conclusion

It has been proven that when the material and human resources are not carefully planned, inefficiency will occur in the system. Inefficient use of educational resources results to wastage which militates against the achievements of the goals and

objectives of the education system. This buttresses the fact that planning is pivotal to the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Therefore, planning remains a veritable tool for curbing wastage in secondary education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on expositions in this paper the following are recommended:

1. The Government and agencies regulating secondary education should ensure that there is in place effective planning mechanisms to ensure that the limited resources available to education are optimally utilized in and for the education system.
2. School administrators should carry out periodic assessment plan to determine the needs of the secondary education so as to eliminate wastage due to repetition.
3. There should be periodic recruitment of professional teachers by Government and Proprietors of secondary schools. This should be carefully planned to meet the increasing number of students in the classrooms.

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