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## Planning for Change and Innovation for Quality Secondary Education Delivery in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The paper focused on planning for change and innovation for quality secondary education delivery in Nigeria. It discussed that it is not enough to operate secondary education as a doctrine but to be goal oriented particularly in this era of global competitiveness. It emphasized the importance of secondary education and the need for education policy makers and administrators of secondary schools to seek towards producing quality graduates with employable skills through planned change and innovative instructional delivery methods. The paper reviewed educational development planning, educational planning for change and innovation, the need for planning change and innovation in secondary schools, and planning change and innovation in secondary education. The paper concluded that to improve students' performance, productivity and effectively achieve the goals of secondary education, well planned educational change and innovative practices should be adopted in secondary schools. Suggestions that only relevant educational change and innovation policies that meet global needs should be adopted and there should be a blue print of strategic planning process for educational administrators to follow.

**Keywords:** Educational Planning, Educational Development Planning, Change and Innovation, Quality Secondary Education.

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### INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of secondary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) is to develop individual mental capacity for self-improvement and to provide entrepreneurial, technical and specific skills for self – reliance and useful living in the society, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014). In relation to this objective, it is apt to also say that secondary education should develop in each Nigerian child the

ideals, knowledge, interest, habits and skills required for self-reliance and employability thereby contributing to the growth and development of the Nigerian society. Moreso, is this relevant in this era when the world is viewed as a global village with interconnections between nations in terms of communication, transportation, education, commerce and technology. Therefore, a secondary school graduate should be able to work anywhere in the world with skills acquired or continue with their education in any university abroad without being asked to repeat secondary education or enrol in a remedial programme given that the quality of secondary education already received in Nigeria is inadequate.

The question then is, are secondary schools in Nigeria adequately equipped with human, material and financial resources to graduate students who can match up with their mates globally? This may not be the state given the decline in the academic performance of students in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). In line with this, Omoregie as cited in Udoh-Uwah (2015) opined that products of secondary schools are not useful in the society or able to gain admission into higher institution without the aid of parents and compromising teachers and principal. In the same vein, Odiya and Omofonmwan in Udoh-uwah (2015) reported that 50% of secondary school students prefer to enrol and write their final year external examinations in remote villages and private schools they refer to as “Special centers” to be able to have access to different forms of examination malpractice. Nicholas and Shubha (2013) further expressed that it is saddening to note that parents who want high grades for their children and wards as well as compromising principals who want high enrolments into their schools are in support of this high level of malpractice that is damaging to the Nigerian secondary educational system.

On the other hand, there seem to also be a shift of focus in secondary education from knowledge and skill acquisition to certificate acquisition. Secondary education therefore suffers from being thought of as a route to higher education rather than itself being a terminal stage in education where preparatory knowledge and skills for future careers are acquired (Nicholas & Shubha, 2013). This action has increased the level from which youths enter the labour force especially in Nigeria where there is lack of funds for further higher education and some form of difficulty encountered in the process of gaining admission into higher institutions drive many secondary school leavers into the labour force. It is therefore needful that the secondary school student is equipped with all the necessary skills, knowledge and ideals needed for him to be gainfully employed and self-reliant towards a developed global society.

Over the years, there has been various changes and innovations in educational policies and programmes which have been initiated without commensurate impact on the secondary school graduate; hence the objectives of the programme have experienced unsteady achievement due to challenges facing the secondary school system such as poor infrastructures, inadequate funding, inadequate qualified and specialist teachers, shortage of facilities, equipment, functional laboratories, instructional materials, unsuitable policy environment and management issues pertaining to school administration (Onuoha & Agabi, 2021). It therefore seems that the use of effective tools in achieving set goals and objectives in the system has not been given the desired

attention. Thus, this paper looks at the strategic planning and implementation of change and innovation for quality secondary education delivery.

## **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

### **Secondary Education System**

Secondary education is the education people receive after primary education, comprising of junior and senior sections for a time period of six years. The main goal of secondary education according to the FRN (2014) is to prepare individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education, inspire students and with desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence, provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. Secondary education therefore plays an important role in making an individual self-reliant and in development of the nations. These objectives can only be achieved with qualitative secondary education delivery which calls for the need to effectively plan for change and innovation in the secondary education system.

Onuoha and Agabi (2021) views secondary education as a very significant aspect of human capital development as it aims at providing further educational opportunity for pupils from primary schools; the provision of a diversified curriculum that takes care of differences in talents, opportunities, roles, etc; provides a pathway for further higher education; develops and projects the Nigerian culture, art, etc; raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor, and appreciate those values specified under the national aims as citizens; inspire students with the desire for achievement and self-improvement, both at school and later on in life and to equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.

### **Educational Development Planning**

Educational planning has been defined variously by different scholars, with Salami (2009) defining it as the application of rational and systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society. Educational planning therefore is a process that is carried out with the aim of achieving a goal that is aimed at meeting the needs of the society. Hence, it can be said that the process of educational planning is only complete when the needs of the society has been meet through educational development programmes. This is in line with the opinion of Alabi and Okemakinde (2010) who are in agreement that an effective plan is one in which desired objectives are clearly stated and strategies described towards their achievement.

Concerning educational planning development, Adiele et al (2011) defined it as activities by educational planners regularly undertaken to improve the standard of education at all levels. It is an initiative geared towards change in the entire content, structure and programmes of an education system to meet the needs of the nation or society. Ibara (2014) added that educational development planning should be holistic with policies and strategies planned to reflect critical elements of education. This is in line with the belief that education is the bedrock of the

development in any nation as the growth of any society is highly dependent on its citizen's level and quality of education.

### **Educational planning for Change and Innovation**

Educational innovation planning is a dimension of educational development planning which deals with the constant re-adjustment of educational programmes to meet current needs in the society especially as regards to new trends in science and technology. However, despite the various reforms and innovations in the education system in Nigeria, the country is yet to catch up with technological and scientific developments of other nations. It is therefore important that change and innovation processes are well planned, implemented and monitored in order to achieve desired results.

Change from the layman's point of view is a shift from the old to the new; it is a perspective that must be accepted in order to move to the next level. Ariguzuo (2015) identifies change as the creation of something different from what existed or a substitute for another. In support Fadipe and Adepoju (2008) defined change as any form of alteration of existing forms or status quo. Ukeje et al. cited in Ariguzuo (2015) further defined educational change as any alteration in the existing trends, in terms of goals, inputs, process, policies, practices, and instructional procedures in the education system. Educational change is therefore a process through which new programmes, practices, techniques or approaches are put into the operations of the educational system to replace previous or ineffective ones.

Change is mostly used interchangeably with innovation as it is difficult to differentiate one from the other. However, innovation can be described as an idea, process or product that is new at the time it is introduced. Ariguzo (2015) sees it as specific changes or alterations that are initiated to facilitate – the achievement of some defined goals. From the perspective of education, Ajuonuma and Oguguo (2014) defined educational innovation as holistic changes in the educational sector which are aimed towards changing aspects of teaching, learning, management, etc for efficiency and effectiveness. Nwankwola (2016) in support defined educational innovation as all forms of innovations that may occur in the structure, administration, curriculum planning, strategies an actual implementation in education that are aimed towards the improvement and development of the entire education sector

It is important to note that the main purpose of innovation into the secondary education system is to introduce new ideas into the existing system to bring about efficiency and effectiveness. For instance, in the secondary education in Nigeria system there is need to bring in new teaching methods, new patterns of taking lesson note, instructional materials, facilities, information technology and communication, laboratories, teacher development programmes, new patterns in computing results, record keeping and curriculum in order to be relevant in today's world of globalization and achieve predetermined goals and objectives for the secondary education. Therefore, to achieve the desired results, educational changes and innovation should be well planned, implemented and monitored.

## **The Need for Planning Change and Innovation for Secondary Education**

The need to plan for change and innovation in secondary education system is very crucial and cannot be overemphasized; as yesterday's educational tools cannot be used to meet the societal and global demands on education in our schools today. Therefore, the following factors provide the rationale for planning for change and innovation in the secondary education system:

1. **Improvement on the standards of secondary education:** The standard of the Nigerian educational system particularly at the secondary school level has been criticized by both internal and external scholars as they claim that the quality of the entire system is way below standard (Onuoha & Agabi, 2021). The learning situation in most secondary schools is pathetic as basic facilities and instructional materials are either not available or inadequate for teaching and learning. There is need for innovation to meet the demands of the changing society globally, to set secondary education to be result focused and development driven.
2. **Future expectations of secondary education:** Secondary education in Nigeria is expected to achieve certain character building principles as stated in the National policy on Education (FRN, 2014) in the future generation such as thinking for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, etc. Therefore, in order to achieve future demands, expectations and trends, of secondary education; there is a need to plan for change and innovation in secondary education.
3. **Need for creativity in secondary education:** The failure in the use of traditional approaches in secondary education calls for a need for creative ideas and innovative strategies in the school system. The teacher standing in front of the students to always teach should be reduced and other methods such as online class, field trips, excursions, group project researches, etc should be introduced; as it will provide students with more opportunity to discover new concepts and methods of solving problems (Onuoha & Agabi, 2021).
4. **Achievement –inclined:** The need to achieve educational set goals and objectives Adiele et al (2017) stands as a rationale for the planning for change and innovation in the secondary education system.
5. **Exogenous factors:** Change in the secondary education system may also be influenced by some exogenous factors such as the public being involved in areas such as moral education, peace – education, security education, entrepreneurial and agricultural skills education. This may therefore be incorporated into the secondary educational system.

## **Planning for Change and Innovation in Secondary Education**

A review of the historical development of educational process in ancient times shows that planning was entwined in their education system. As opined by Adiele et al. (2017), renowned

cities like Sparta, Athens, China, Rome and Egypt became famous through well-coordinated and planned educational programmes. John Knox in the 16<sup>th</sup> century according to Alabi and Okemakinde (2010) prepared a plan of education which has helped the Scots achieve spiritual salvation and possess material wellbeing. Although there are differences between educational planning of today and educational planning of ancient times, they are all aimed at the achievement of educational needs and aspirations of their society. Therefore, to have a secondary education that is relevant, functional and responsive to the needs of the society, a logical and systematic planning process for change and innovation in the system is necessary; as it will entail the conscious use of educational programmes to meet societal needs and bring about development to both the individual and the society.

### Framework for planning for change and innovation

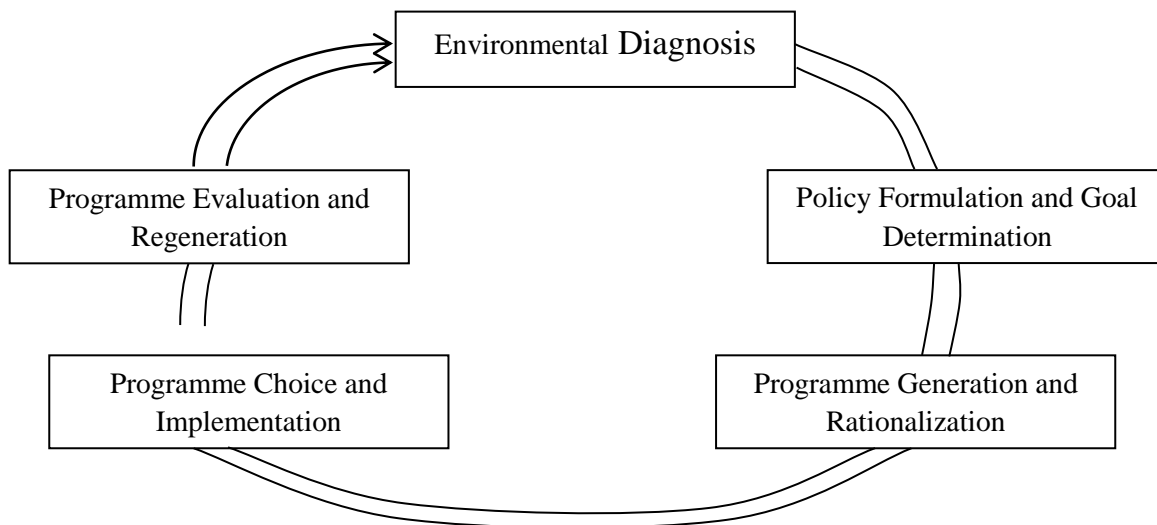


Fig 1: Educational Planning model adapted from Adiele et al. (2017) and modified by the author.

The framework in figure 1 explains a model that educational processes can be followed to achieve educational goals at different educational levels. The different process is further explained below.

1. **Environmental Diagnosis of Secondary Education in Nigeria:** The task of environmental diagnosis involves a situational analysis of the present condition of things in secondary schools. Therefore, there is a need to understand the existing situations so as to proffer changes and innovations. The focus of environmental diagnosis of secondary education should be basically in the areas of poor planning (inadequate data, lack of experience and qualified personnel and overcrowded or classrooms); inadequate funding/misappropriation of fund; poor implementation of the secondary education curriculum due to unqualified manpower, facilities and instructional resources; and teaching methodology.

2. **Policy formulation and goal determination for quality secondary education delivery:** Having generated all the data and information from the environmental analysis which indicates the need for change and innovation, the appropriate authorities will assume the task of policy formulation and goals determination for quality education delivery. These policies are usually formulated through legislative procedures which then become legal instruments after the assent of the executive is given, and they are to provide a strategic roadmap for which the goals are to be pursued in view of the different educational programmes and projects. The goals to be determined are expected to include;
  - i. Provision of all secondary school leavers with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that are relevant for work such as media, information and technology skills, and learning and innovation skills.
  - ii. Develop in students cognitive skills which are basic mental abilities used for thinking, studying and learning of numeracy and literary skills.
  - iii. Raise a generation of students with life and career skills of adaptability, initiative, flexibility, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability skills, leadership and responsibility skills.
  - iv. Provide technical and vocational skills that are geared towards a specific occupation, such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, fashion designing, cookery, music, wood work.
  - v. Develop in the students learning and innovative skills which includes critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.
  
3. **Programme generation and rationalization for quality secondary education delivery:** The task here involves a critical and technical analysis of the broad goals for quality secondary education delivery, stated clearly in measurable terms of what is to be achieved within a specific time frame. This phase in the planning process basically involves:
  - i. Translating the goals of secondary education into specific measurable objectives to be achieved within the six years of secondary education. These specific objectives can be pointed out as by ensuring: Quality and standards of secondary education to meet societal and global needs; Functionality and relevance of the curriculum and instruction in meeting the societal and employability needs; An enabling teaching and learning environment; Wider range of programme assessment; and professional development and quality of teachers
  - ii. Organizing activities to be carried out in respect to who will teach what, in what class it should be taught and for what duration.
  - iii. Estimating human, physical and financial resources required to execute the plan by checking out the available resources.
  
4. **Programme choice and implementation:** There are three basic tasks to be carried out in this stage. They are;

- i. Decide on the specific programmes that will be taught in the secondary schools in the areas of: Computer studies (use of computer, simulation instruction, Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer Based Learner (CBI) and E-learning); Science related subjects such as chemistry, physics, biology with the use of new technologies and innovations; Numeracy and literacy subjects (mathematics, English language, research and report writing); Behavioural skill development subjects such as sociology etc.; Vocational subjects (carpentry, tailoring, agriculture with the use of modern technologies); Entrepreneurial subjects (e-trade and commerce); Field trips/excursions; and holiday projects
- ii. The implementation of these programmes will entail the availability and utilization of all human, financial and material resources available for the successful and effective achievement of objectives of the programme.
- iii. Monitoring should be carried out at the same time implementation activities are to ensure strict compliance with set guidelines and specifications. The monitoring should include monitoring of the level of available laboratories, facilities and equipment for learning and the number of qualified and specialist teachers available for implementation of the programmes.

**5. Programme evaluation and regeneration:** This is done to ensure that deviations from set procedures and guidelines are avoided, by ensuring room for programme modifications, adjustment and reforms.

## CONCLUSION

In a developing country like Nigeria where there are great socio-economic and political experiences, educational policies must be dynamic and innovative. Moreso in this era of global competitiveness and knowledge driven society where emphasis is on building a strong and well developed national economy through quality education in terms of quality inputs, processes and outputs. Therefore, secondary education should adopt well-planned innovative practices in secondary school administration and teaching that are geared towards meeting the changing needs of the society and global world; through the improvement of school performance, productivity, quality education and global relevance.

## SUGGESTIONS

Based on the discussions above, the following suggestions are made:

1. It is important for education policy makers to understand the need for change and innovation towards quality secondary education delivery and its intended benefits.
2. To ensure that change and innovations are suitable, necessary and appropriate to meet learners, societal and global needs.
3. The provision of strategic planning process should be adopted by secondary education management.

4. All human, financial and material resources required for the implementation of plans should be adequately provided for and monitored towards effective and successful achievement of the objectives of the programme.
5. Implementation is key in achieving set objectives; therefore, implementers of the curriculum (teachers) should be regularly motivated for improved efficiency and effective performances, as well as be part of the school's administrative processes.
6. Seminars, conferences and workshops should be periodically organized to update implementers on new trends of teaching methods and use of instructional materials.
7. Modern learning aids such as computers, overhead projectors, films, etc should be provided in secondary schools for learning.
8. Secondary schools should be connected to the internet to enable teachers and students access information in conformity with the rapid demand of globalization which necessitates innovations.

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