RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Many countries have a national curriculum and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. Institutions may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of student need. Except adequate and the right type of education be provided for the Nigerian populace, especially the youths and children, unemployment will always remain the bedrock of Nigeria's turn around to backwardness. This paper addresses the fact that for the Nigeria education to impact on the society particularly the employers of labour, Educational Management Development must be encouraged i.e. Empowering educational institutions to enrich the already existing curriculum by providing regulatory bodies.

Keywords: Education, Educational Management Development, Curriculum, National Policy on Education.

Introduction

Education is seen by all and sundry as a panacea for a vast task of society and the bedrock for national development (Ihebereme and Maduewesi, 2008). Widely recognized as the most populous nation in Africa (World Bank, 2005); it is regrettable that till date, Nigeria is still among countries with high prevalence of illiterate adults, that seem to constitute a drag in different spheres of development programme in attaining national development (Okeke and Mbalisi, 2006).

Educational management is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations. The present author has argued consistently (Bush, 1986; 1995; 1999 & 2003) that educational management has to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education. These purposes or goals provide the crucial sense of direction to underpin the management of educational institutions. The pursuit of efficiency may be the mission statement of management – but this is efficiency in the achievement of objectives which others define" (Newman & Clarke,

1994).

Many countries have a national curriculum and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. Institutions may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of student need. The key issue here is the extent to which school managers are able to modify government policy and develop alternative approaches based on school-level values and vision.

Educational management has progressed from being a new field dependent upon ideas developed in other settings to become an established field with its own theories and research.

Concept of Education

According to Agbunno (2007), education like other concepts has no singly accepted definition. However, what is central about it is that, education is a learning one undergoes from birth to death. This then makes education to be a process, which internationally transmits what is considered by the society to be valuable, in an intelligent and valuable manner.

Education forms the basis of human understanding and knowledge about himself and society. It improves the entire individual and helps him to live effectively in the society and education relates to some sorts of process in which a desirable state of mind develop being worthwhile.

Ezewu (1983) summarizes education as an institution which:
- Prepares individual minds developing the right personality
- Equips individual with knowledge, skills needed by the society
- Equips individual to bring about future development of the society

The education of any state is driven by curricula and all curricula in use have levels of planning. It is possible to identify five levels of curriculum planning models, which moves from the general to the specific and from the abstract to the concrete classroom situation (Morrison and Ridley, 1988).

Nigeria Educational Challenge

The basic philosophy of Nigeria Education emphasizes integrating the individual into a sound and effective citizen and providing equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation and in line with the requirement of the National Policy on Education, all school curricula were redesigned to reflect the new thinking at that time. The question of relevance of our curriculum is a fundamental issue (Mamza, 2008).

Except adequate and the right type of Education be provided for the Nigerian populace, especially the youths and children, unemployment will always remain the bedrock of Nigeria's turn around to backwardness (Diwunma, 2006).

In stating the national educational aims and objectives, the National Policy on Education (2004) highlights the necessity for the inculcation of national consciousness, national unity, the right type of values and attitudes, the training of the mind, and the acquisition of appropriate mental and physical skills, abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to effectively integrate in and contribute to the development of his society.

Have the Nigeria educational policy and curriculum answer the above questions. If no, what is wrong?

The social and moral development of students is a primary task of schools towards all students in all the subjects offered by them (Ten-Dam and Volmam, 2003). The search for an all-encompassing model is simplistic, for no one model can delineate the intricacies of decision processes in complex organizations in curricula development such as universities and colleges (Baldridge *et al,* 1978). Collegial/School models are attractive because they advocate teacher participation in decision-making. The collegial/school framework all too often provides the setting for political activity or "top-down" decision-making (Bush, 2003).

Conceptualizing Educational Management Development

Leadership and management are often regarded as essentially practical activities. Practitioners and policy-makers tend to be dismissive of theories and concepts for their alleged remoteness from the "real" school situation. Willower (1980), for example, asserts that "the application of theories by practicing administrators [is] a difficult and problematic undertaking. Indeed, it is clear that theories are simply not used very much in the realm of practice." The connection between policy makers, the educational system and the employers have always been the problem and will continue to be the problem until something is done.

The summary of the Nigerian educational philosophy is as follows:
   i.   Develop the individual into sound and active citizen
   ii.   Full integration of the individual into the community (employer) and
   iii.   Provision of equal access to education by all her citizens

Successive government in Nigeria have since her independence in 1960 have come up with different educational systems to combat the issues in (i) and (ii) by empowering her population to combat unemployment and satisfy the need of employers but to a large extent all her efforts have not yield the needed result.

Educational Management Development is a way of developing students by school i.e. introducing or enriching curriculum to improve their students to meet the challenges of the society and employers of labour. It is also to give the schools the enabling frameworks to enhance and improve upon the minimum curriculum given or issued by the regulatory bodies.

The process of education involves the socialization of individuals to become integral part of the society in which they live. Through education, individuals are trained to acquire knowledge, useful skills, desirable values, attitudes and habits to adjust themselves to the changing condition of their worlds. Employers do not find it funny when you have to re-train a graduate who graduate from a certain course to be able to perform their job.

In other to deal with this problem, the individual school should be allowed to introduce important ingredients that their students need to be relevant to the market and this is Educational Management. Figure 1 shows the importance of Educational Management.
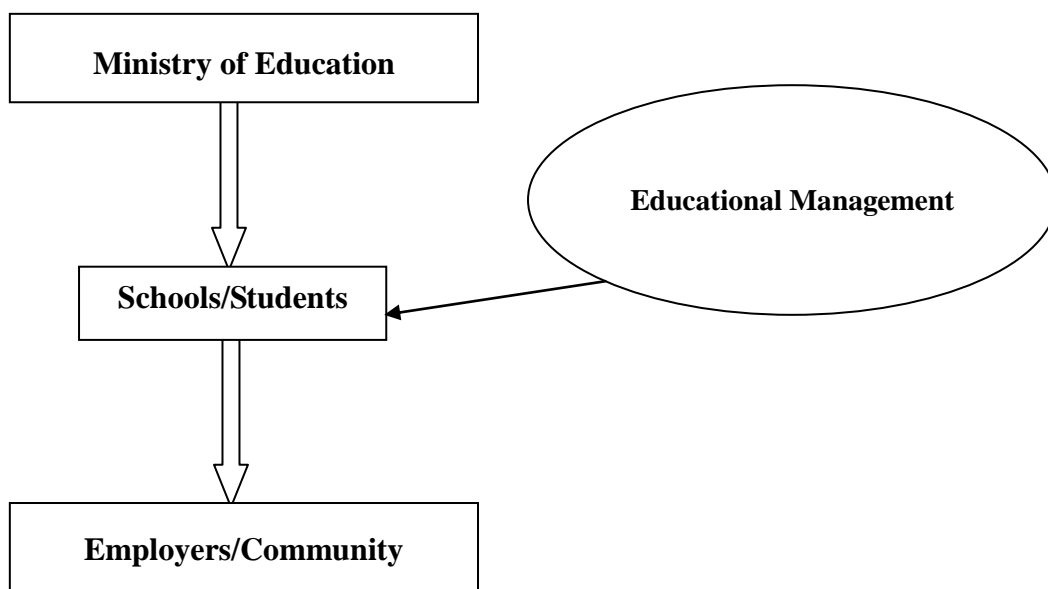

Figure 1: Showing Interrelation between the Major Players in Education

Collegial/School models contribute several important concepts to the theory of educational management. Participative approaches are a necessary antidote to the rigid hierarchical assumptions of the formal models. However, collegial perspectives underestimate the official authority of the principal and present bland assumptions of consensus, which often cannot be substantiated. Little (1990) following substantial research in the United States, concludes that collegiality "turns out to be rare". Collegiality is an elusive ideal but a measure of participation is essential if schools are

to be harmonious and creative organization (society and employers of labour).

Conclusion

The Nigeria's big dream to use education par excellence to develop the nation is not a misplaced idea at all. The very opening of the National Policy on Education (NPE) declares education as the best and unequalled instrument for national development. The challenges are that there must be a marriage between what is taught in schools and where such knowledge will be use.

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