

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING OF OUT-OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Educational administration and planning is key to the realization of educational objectives. It helps in the systematic arrangement of educational resources to attain the set goals of the education. The issue of out-of-school children in Nigeria is a pressing concern that has significant implications for the country's educational system and overall development. As of recent reports, Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children globally, with estimates suggesting around 18.3 million children are not enrolled in formal education. It is unfortunate that educational administration and planning in Nigeria is facing numerous challenges that is preventing it from achieving the solution of out-of school children. The aim of this paper is to discuss the challenges and prospect of educational administration and planning of out-of school children in Nigeria. To address the challenges preventing effective educational administration in and planning of out-of school children, the following have been recommended: appointment of competent administrators, adequate fund, fight institutional corruption, identify number of out of school children, safe and welcoming learning environments, after-school/out-of-school opportunities, managing and improving instruction, provide career and technical education, identifying student at risk, provide quality of teachers, ensuring equality of access to quality basic education and provision of adequate securities.

Keyword: Out of school, Education, Administration

Introduction

Educational administration is key to the realization of educational objectives. The critical roles education plays in the socio-economic and political development of any nation can never be over emphasized. Education is the pivot upon which the quality of a country's human capacity development is enhanced. From every indication, the economic and technological advances recorded in every nation is tied to the educational attainment of its citizens globally. It is obvious therefore that the survival of any organized nation depends on the quality of education of its population. It helps in the systematic arrangement of educational resources to attain the set goals of the education. The administration of the education system is shared mainly among the education ministries at the federal and state levels, as well as statutory bodies referred to as commissions. There are commissions established for different subsectors of the education system and are charged with various

responsibilities for the subsectors. According to a report, Nigeria has some of the worst education indicators globally. The report indicates that Nigeria has about 10.5 million out-of-school children, which is the largest in Africa in absolute terms. It also identifies inequity and education costs as indices that have contributed to the damning evidence of the state of education. From these indications, it is obvious that Nigeria might not achieve the MDGs of the EFA by the 2015 global timeline in spite of the commitment and efforts of the Federal Government towards the attainment of such goal (Moja, 2021).

Achieving Quality for all indicates that Nigeria is among the 37 countries that are losing money spent on education, because children are not learning. UNESCO disclosed that the menace is already costing governments USD 129 billion a year. It stressed further that despite the money being spent, rejuvenation of primary education is not in the near future because of poor-quality education that fails to ensure that children learn (Moja, 2021). According to the Moja, (2021) report, Nigeria is one of the only 15 countries that are projected to have less than 80 per cent of its primary school-age children enrolled in school by 2015. Nigeria's out-of-school population grew the most worldwide since 2004–2005 by 3.4 million; the country also had the fourth highest growth rate of out-of-school population in the world (UNESCO, 2020). In its 2021 report on perception of wellbeing, the United Nations Development Program stated that only 55 per cent of Nigerians were satisfied with the country's education quality, 48 percent were satisfied with its healthcare quality, and 36 percent were satisfied with the standard of living.

Every child has a potential that once adequately nurtured by the society and its institutions, it will become qualitatively fulfilling. The child is a product of the society into which it is born into. The depth of a tree is determined by the depth of its roots. Only few children will grow above the type of training and educational system that they are being exposed to and the circumstances that are prevalent at the disposal of the child while pursuing their education. In Nigeria, a combination of factors might be responsible for children not enrolling at schools at all or dropping out of school a short while later. These school dropouts and those who are not privileged to attend schools at all or engage in any meaningful skills that can prepare them for a better future, are all collectively described as out-of-school children. Again, no one can specifically point out the total number of children who are not engaged in the formal school sector today in Nigeria. The above notwithstanding, most authorities believe that there are more than 18 million Nigerian children who are out-of-school (Ihejirika, 2023). These figures have been strongly disputed by the Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu (The Guardian, 2021). One vital question begging for answers from the education authorities is, should any child be left out of school? The argument as to whether there is only one child that is out-of-school may not be necessary or hold water. It is the duty of every responsible government to ensure that the upcoming generations measure up to the standard it requires through adequate implementation of the curriculum; furthermore, education is the right of every child.

Out-of-school children in Nigeria represent a significant challenge to the country's educational system. According to UNICEF, Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children globally, with estimates suggesting that over 18.3 million children are not enrolled in formal education. This situation poses serious implications for national

development, social stability, and economic growth. This article is aimed to examine the challenges facing the administration and planning of out of school children in Nigeria.

Overview of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria

The term out of school refer to those who have not been enrolled in any formal education system, excluding preprimary education. This group typically include children aged 6 to 11 years who are supposed to be in school but are unable to attend due to failure on the part of parents and government to provide accessible and quality education. (Ojalade, et al.,2019 as cited in Ogunode, et al.,2022). Nigeria has the largest number of out-of-school children in the world (UNICEF, 2018). It is estimated that one in every five out-of-school children around the globe is in Nigeria. Even though basic education is legally free and compulsory in the country, about 18.3 million children aged 5 to 14 years are out of school. About 50 percent of these children live in the northern region, known to be severely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. In addition, only 61 percent of children between the ages of 6 to 11 years attend primary school regularly (UNICEF, 2018).

Education

Education deals with knowledge acquisition, training and development of the individual to be able to contribute positively to the society. Education embraces not only school experiences but also indirect or incidental influences which help us to learn, such influences and activities affect our character, behaviours and perceptions. Ogunode, (2020), Sees education as an enabling agency by which the Africans could restore their self-confidence, and make those who doubted the humanity of Africans begin to revise their views and learn to respect Africans. From the above, education is a form of training given to the individual that makes him useful in the communities.

Administration

Administration is act of arranging resources to achieve institutional goals. Administration is the systematic process of applying both human and materials resource to realize the objectives of an organization. Administration is the application and the deployment of organizational resource to towards achievement of organizational goals (Akinpelu, 1984). Nwakwo (1987) in his own view describes administration as the careful and systematic arrangement and use of human and material resources, situations and opportunities for the achievement of specific objectives.

Educational Administration

According to Nwakwo (1987) educational administration implies the arrangement of the human and material resources and programme available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational objectives. Thus educational administrator, whether in the ministry of education, the schools board, or in a school is essentially the organiser, the implementer of plans, policies and programmes meant for achieving specific educational objectives. The educational administrator may contribute, one way or the other, in planning, policy – making and programme designing, yet his major

role rests with the effective and efficient implementation of such plans, policies and programmes for the benefit of education.

Challenges of Educational Administration and Planning of Out-of-School Children

Generally, educational administration have been facing many challenges in Nigeria at the both external and internal administrative. Some of the challenges preventing effective administration of education in Nigeria include: weak school administrators, lack of data to plan, inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, institutions Corruption, Insecurity.

Ineffective Educational Planning

Ineffective educational planning is a major factor responsible for the large out of school children in Nigeria. The educational planning system has failed over years to capture the actual population growth rate into the educational planning system of the country. One of the features of educational planning is projection and forecasting. Akpan (undated) opined that the educational planners in Nigeria sometimes underestimate the cost of education as a result of poor forecasting of students' enrolment (For example the cost of UPE scheme in Eastern Nigeria in 1957 was greatly underestimated. This gave rise to poor implementation of the scheme. The number of pupils enrolled in the scheme was greater than the estimated figure. There were no classrooms for pupils to learn and the new schools established were not enough to accommodate the increase in pupils' enrolment. The government needed more funds for administration of the programme. All these happened because of poor prediction by educational planners.

Poor Funding for Education

Poor funding of education is another factor responsible for the high number of out of school children in Nigeria. Poor funding of education at all levels of education is responsible for a large number of out-of school children in Nigeria. This position is supported by Ogunode & Stephen (2021) who observed that the budgetary allocation for the educational sector is inadequate and below the recommendation of UNESCO 26% for developing countries like Nigeria. The little funds released for the administration of Basic education are diverted by the officials and political office holders. The corrupt practices at the administrative level of basic Education are among the factors that are responsible for the shortage of funds for the administration of Basic education in Nigeria. Shortage of funds for the internal administration of primary schools in the country is caused by the administrative corruption in the administrative offices and ministries in charge of primary school administration. There are many factors responsible for poor funding of education especially the universal Basic education programme in Nigeria Raliyat, Umma, & Aisha (2022)

Inadequate Educational Institutions

Inadequate educational institutions especially the basic schools are responsible for the high number of out of school children in Nigeria. The educational institutions for all the forms of education are not adequate to meet up with the population grow rate of the country. For

instance, Statista (2019) reported that public primary schools in Nigeria is 61,921, private 55,004 totaling 116,925. These public basic schools are not adequate to meet up with the millions of out of school children in Nigeria.

High Fertility Rate

The fertility rate of Nigerians are high, due to religious and cultural factors many Nigerians have more than one wife and they give birth to more children especially in the northern Nigeria. Ajemba, Ahmed, Ogunode and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) observe that another problem militating effective implementation of primary school education policies is the rising population of children enrolling in primary school education in Nigeria. Educating this high population required a lot of financial commitment to engage human and material resource.

Lack of Political Will to Address Out-of-School Problem

The lack of political will to develop basic education at the state and local government level is also responsible for the out-of-school children. The state government and local government that are in charge of the administration and management of basic education are not demonstrating any political will to develop the sector. This position is supported by the federal government when she accused some northern state governments of alleged mismanagement of the basic education funds in their state. Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, (2021) made allegations against some state governments. The Minister also observed that the situation was discouraging the federal government's bid to intervene in the educational programme, noting also that the problem with the Almajiri education was that it was wrongly implemented.

Corruption

Corruption is a major problem responsible for high out of school children in Nigeria (Ogunode & Stephen 2021). Corruption has penetrated all institutions in Nigeria including educational institutions. Funds released for the implementation of programmes and policies aimed to reduce out of school children in Nigeria are been misuses and mismanaged and diverted into private pockets. A good example is the national feeding programme with a lot of funds diversion allegation and mismanagement. Ogunode & Abubakar (2021) submitted that corruption is a major problem facing the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria. The funds released for the implementation of the programme is been looted and mismanaged by some officers handling the implementation across the fcdcration.

Insecurity

Another factor responsible for the problem of out of school children in Nigeria is insecurity especially in the Northern Nigeria. Insecurity in Northern part of Nigeria have led to school closure. Odeyemi (2021) noted that disruption of school administration, learning loss due to school closure, low enrolment, retention and completion rate of Basic school programme, reduction in manpower, disruption in academic calendar of Basic school,

killing of students, delay in development or progress of girl's child education and delay in development of Basic education were identified as the effects of insecurity on administration of Basic schools in Northern Nigeria. Ogunode (2021) reported the death of students, teachers and school administrators. Okoh, et al., (2020) observed that many parents are afraid of sending their children to school because of the insecurity problem in the country. The destruction of schools by insurgents, forced displacement and volatile nature of the region has grossly impacted accessibility to primary education in the area.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the challenges and prospect of educational administration and planning of out-of school children in Nigeria. Educational administration and planning is key to the realization of educational objectives. It helps in the systematic arrangement of educational resources to attain the set goals of the education. The issue of out-of-school children in Nigeria is a pressing concern that has significant implications for the country's educational system and overall development. The rate of out-of school children in the country out weights the number of children currently enrolled in Nigeria schools. This is owing to a number of factors as earlier highlighted in the discussion. This situation has far reaching effects on the economic growth and development of the country. The paper identify challenges of educational administration and planning of out of school children which include, ineffective planning, corruption, high fertility rate, inadequate educational institution, poor funding, insecurity. Educational administrators and planners must rise up to the occasion by making plans to address the issue of out of school in Nigeria.

Recommendation

In order to find a lasting solution to the challenges of educational administration and planning of out-of-school children in Nigeria, the paper recommended the following

1. Government should appoint competent heads to manage the various educational institutions and also to tackle the situation of out-of school children, by investigating the issues that warrant their out –of school. The appointment should be based on track records of performance not just on political consideration.
2. Government should improve on percentage of her annual budget to education as recommended by UNESCO, which is 26% of the entire budget. The proportion of budget meant for the education sector should be allocated to the three levels of education based on reliable statistics on enrolment, dropout students/out-of school children, adequate infrastructure, conductive environment, for training of out-of school children and so on.
3. The government should fight all school corruption especially secondary and primary schools. The government should put in place measures to ensure accountability of funds allocated to education reached it place. Many out-of school children find it difficult to cope with the school expenses of buying book, school uniforms, PTA levies and so no, which government have make it available in schools but due to corruption in our school today, student have to dropout because they can't afford such items.

4. Educational Planners first of all need to develop improved instruments that accurately identify the number of out-of-school children and help understand the characteristics and reasons why they remain excluded from school. Identifying the number of children that are currently out of school will give educational planners a clue to the rate of drop out when compared with in-school children. From the data obtained, educational planners should be able to identify the characteristics of such children who have dropped out and also the reasons why they are not in school. Such facts obtained should be addressed during planning and policy formulations.
5. Educational planners need to take into consideration the fact that what happens during instructions between the learners and teacher can influence the learners' interest in school. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience through the primary grades. The teacher, the classroom setting, the lessons, delivery methods and the learner's involvement during lessons all play important roles in sustaining the learner's interest in school.
6. Government should make a provision of career and technical education classes to make school more interesting and meaningful for children. Personalized learning is another way of making learning more engaging and relevant for out-of school children. Also, vocational and technical education in Nigeria are key aspects of education meant to equip learners with skills that can help them fend for themselves after school or later on in life.

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