

Re-Positioning Curriculum Implementation Process in Secondary Education System of Ebonyi State of Nigeria to Achieve Education for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: The study examined the re-positioning process in curriculum implementation of secondary education system of Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development. Four research questions guided the study and the design was Ex-Post-facto type cum unstructured interviews with stakeholders in the secondary education system of the state. Descriptive interpretation of the data was done with the help of tables for better presentation and analysis. The findings showed that Ebonyi State Government has mapped out key areas and procedures for the re-positioning of secondary education system. Again, the paper highlighted the successes so far recorded and the envisaged challenges. Steps to be taken to mitigate the challenges were proffered and general recommendations made.

Key words: Curriculum • Education • Development and secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic force for the socio-economic and political transformation of any society. Adegoke [1] posits that no nation can develop without an effective educational system. This is because quality education empowers its recipients with the appropriate skills, knowledge and values to adapt and contribute effectively in national development. This Azubuike [2] affirm that education need to be purposeful in order to fortify its recipients with what it takes to live worthwhile life. It then means that for any meaningful development to occur in any nation, it needs individuals who have gone through specialist training to solve national problems as they emerge re-echoe the authors: In line with this expectation, The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013:14) sub-section 6e emphasizes that education should empower its recipients with the appropriate skills, physical and social abilities and competencies to live in and contribute positively to the society; hence the need to re-position our educational system for sustainable development.

Nigeria with its teeming population of youths has been burdened on how to help them to acquire basic

survival skills for sustainability. This yearning has led the nation to key into the United Nations' stride launched in 2005 tagged "United Nations' Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Following this declaration, UNESCO launched the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD. The overall goal of the GAP was to generate and scale up actions in all levels and areas of education. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an offshoot of the global vision of the United Nations' Sustainable Development popularly called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are 17 in Number.

The focus of the present study is on Goal 4 which reads "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2014). According to Ebonyi State Ministry of Education [3] sustainable development involves meeting the needs of the present generation without denying future generation access to the same resources. It also refers to the mode of human development in which resources use aim at meeting human needs while preserving the environment to ensure sustainability for the next generation. This implies that human resources are trained to utilize available human and

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material resources effectively to maintain economic stability and equilibrium. This calls for proper implementation of planned curriculum.

Curriculum implementation or delivery involves the active process of teaching in the classroom and other environments where the class is located. Ebonyi State Ministry of Education [4] maintain that a well-planned curriculum need to be properly implemented to yield the desired results and must keep abreast of new and emerging trends for sustainability. So Essien [5] now see the process of curriculum implementation as the interaction between the teachers and learners to achieve set objectives and learning experience. This active interaction is expected to produce desired positive changes in learners. Teachers as curriculum implementers interpret and communicate the curriculum to the learners to ensure efficient and effective use of the country's investment in education. These noble strides have led to the present study on re-positioning curriculum implementation process in Ebonyi State Secondary Education System to achieve education for sustainable development.

Ebonyi State is one of the 36 States in the country created in October, 1996 by the late Military Head of State-General Sani Abacha from the old Enugu State. The state has been battling with problems of standing on its own and occasionally ascribed as educational disadvantaged state. In order to remove this snag attached to Ebonyi State, various state governors from Dr. Sam Egwu to Chief Martin Elechi and presently, Engineer David Umahi have made concerted efforts to re-position the state for the better. According to the Ebonyi State Ministry of Education [4] report, Chief Martin Elechi took some bold steps like: introduction of 27 pilot boarding schools and construction of three Technical Colleges; giving of 50% fee rebates for WAEC and NECO registration fees and beefing up the inspectorate division for more result oriented monitoring and supervision of schools. These were laudable steps for proper re-positioning of the school system in Ebonyi State. The incumbent State Governor-Engineer. David Umahi who was then the Deputy Governor has decided to run with the vision of re-positioning education for sustainable development from 2015 when he entered. According to Green Barge Reporters (2015), the Governor made it categorically clear that his government was moved to rescue the education sector. This he did by setting up a committee headed by. Rev. (Fr.) Abraham Nwali. They were asked to submit their

report by September, 2015 with 11 Terms of References. The Governor stated that he was concerned about the state of schools and the number of teachers in such schools. He assured the committee that if the assignment is properly done will lead to the dawn of a new era, not just in the education sector, but in the development of the state. These sincere yearnings of the state government have led to the present study.

Education is a veritable tool for sustainable development of any nation. The nation of Nigeria has made giant steps to key into global programmes to enhance its human and material resources. At the state level, administrators are doing their best to empower their teaming youths through proper education and skill acquisition programmes. Ebonyi as one of the youngest state in the federation and ascribed as educationally disadvantaged have taken the bull by the horn to re-position its educational system to enhance sustainability in order to meet up with global trends; hence the need for this study that thus ask: In what ways are the curriculum implementation process in Ebonyi State secondary education system re-positioned to achieve education for sustainable development?

The main purpose of the study was to examine the re-positioning process of curriculum implementation in secondary education system of Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development. Specifically, the study examined:

- Key areas to be re-positioned;
- Procedures of re-positioning the key areas
- Achievements recorded so far as a result of the re-positioning and
- Challenges and the way forward in the re-positioning process.

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the key areas to be re-positioned in the secondary education system of Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development?
- What are the procedures adopted in the key areas to reposition secondary education in the state to achieve education for sustainable development?
- What achievements have been recorded so far as a result of the re-positioning of secondary education system in the Ebonyi State?
- What are the obvious challenges in the re-positioning process and the way forward in secondary education in Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive survey using Ex-Post-Facto design was adopted for the study. In addition, unstructured interviews based on the research questions were also employed to elicit responses from stakeholders in Ebonyi State educational system that includes: Chairman of the monitoring of students on loitering and hawking; a Principal and a teacher in the secondary education system and some parents. The Ex-Post Facto design used involved working with the Ebonyi State Mimeograph on re-positioning of the state education system. This design was deemed appropriate as there was no manipulation of records during the gathering of data. The data gathered from these two major sources were descriptively interpreted and organized in tables in line with the research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the data that answered research question 1.

Table 1 presents the 13 giant strides mapped out by Ebonyi State government to re-position its educational system to achieve education for sustainable development. Out of the 13 items, 8 items are already in progress in the state for proper re-positioning as can be seen in Table 1. On the other hand, five items are still pending like: returning of some schools to missions (Items 3); developing of model schools to be built in item 5; items 7, 8 and 11 on tying students’ performance to that of teachers; implementation of UNICEF teacher- student

ratio and introduction of unified school calendar respectively. These five areas are delicate and need proper planning and consultations before they can be fully implemented. On the whole, the findings show that Ebonyi State Government is eager to re-position curriculum implementation process to achieve sustainable education.

Table 2: Presents the data that answered research question 2.

Table 2 is the presentation of measures adopted for the proper implementation of the key areas for proper re-positioning of the education sector of Ebonyi State. Interestingly, the ten areas are in progress at various levels. Five areas are in full progress because of their urgency, while the remaining five is progressing gradually because of their nature. The ten key procedures are in order to effectively enhance curriculum implementation in the secondary schools to achieve education for sustainable development.

Table 3 presents the data that answered research question 3.

A look at Table 3 shows that there are eight achievements recorded in the re-positioning strides of Ebonyi State Government on curriculum implementation process to achieve education for sustainable development. They include: proper organization; sensitization, teachers’ and students’ seriousness; parents’ high confidence level; high school enrolment; improved discipline level and reduction of examination malpractice. These strides show active government moves to reposition the state educational system.

Table 4 presents the data that answered research question 4.

Table 1: Keys areas to re-position secondary education system of Ebonyi State.

S/N	Item specification	Status of implementation	
		In progress	Not yet implemented
1	Preparation of a practical 3-year rolling plan for the education sector	✓	-
2	Developing strategies for interventionary measures in the state school system	✓	-
3	Returning of some schools to missions.	-	✓
4	Developing a model for effective supervision of schools in the state.	✓	-
5	Developing a model of schools to be built in each of the 13 LGAs to serve as a benchmark	-	✓
6	Designation of some schools as science, arts and arts and science schools.	✓	-
7	Developing a system whereby the performance of students would be tied to that of their teacher.	-	✓
8	Implementation of teacher-student ratio of 35-40 in compliance to UNICEF standard.	-	✓
9	Conduct of examination to re-assess all teachers in the state public schools.	✓	-
10	Introduction of unified exam system for both public and private schools in the state.	-	✓
11	Introduction of unified school calendar system for both public and private schools in the state	✓	-
12	Introduction of school farms for practicalization of agriculture	✓	-
13	Introduction of sports as a core component of school curriculum	✓	-

(Source: Ebonyi State Bulletin for overhauling the educational system, 2015)

Table 2: Procedures adopted in the key areas to re-position secondary education in Ebonyi State

S/N	Item specification	Status of implementation	
		In full progress	Gradual progress
1	Setting up task force to monitor school activities	✓	-
2	Monitoring the educational system of some schools in some States of Nigeria	-	✓
3	Reviewing pattern of education outside the country for sustainable development	-	✓
4	Meeting with public and private school heads to make inputs.	✓	-
5	Opinion polls from diverse stakeholders in the educational system for their inputs.	-	✓
6	Meeting with religious bodies that have a stake in education for their inputs	-	✓
7	Formation of committees to extensively review state of the schools in the state and to make their inputs	✓	-
8	Screening/re-training of teachers for maximum output.	✓	-
9	Strengthening of existing infrastructures and developing of new ones as the case may be	-	✓
10	Executive and legislative arms of the Ebonyi State government considerations of reports from various education sectors in the state in order to act accordingly.	✓	-

(Source: Fieldwork data, 2016 and Ebonyi State Ministry of Education Taskforce Report, 2016)

Table 3: Achievements so far recorded in the re-positioning of the educational system of Ebonyi State

S/N	Achievements so far:
1	Proper organization of Ebonyi State Education system.
2	Sensitization of the entire populace of Ebonyi State on the need for proper education.
3	Teachers now more serious than ever in the process of curriculum implementation.
4	Students now punctual and regular to school because of effective monitoring.
5	Parents' confidence in the public educational system of Ebonyi State.
6	High school enrolment as a result of effective teaching and learning.
7	Discipline level of teachers and students improved significantly because of conducive teaching and learning environments.
8	Drastic reduction in the incidence of examination malpractices because of proper monitoring of both internal and external examinations

(Source: Fieldwork Data, 2016 and Ebonyi State Ministry of Education Taskforce Report, 2016)

Table 4: Challenges in the re-positioning process and the way forward

S/N	Envisaged challenges	The way forward
1	Dearth of funds to empower the implementation committees' work to fast-forward the repositioning	Need for government to diversify its economy in order to generate more funds.
2	Uncooperative attitudes of some stake-holders in education in the state.	Genuine appeal for the cooperation and presentation of good reasons for the re-positioning
3	Betrayal of trust by those who have been asked to do one thing or the other for the re-positioning process.	Government to identify the main professionals in the education sector to help the government to achieve these intentions
4	Lack of performing skills by school administrators to drive the re-positioning process of the state government.	Need to re-orientate the principals and the other administrators on what is expected of them.
5	Lack of good welfare packages for the curriculum implementers (teachers)	Need for government to give good welfare packages to the teachers as they determine the quality of the education system.
6	Politicization of genuine government efforts in the re-positioning process of secondary education in Ebonyi State.	Need to involve religious leaders of worth to address some of the political factors that cause problem in the state.

(Source: Fieldwork Data, 2016 and Ebonyi State Ministry of Education Taskforce Report, 2016)

Finally, Table 4 presents the obvious challenges in the way of the re-positioning process and the way forward. There are six challenges identified which include: dearth of funds, use of non professionals and non-training of the curriculum implementers and administrators' lack of cooperation and the politicization aspects. The way forward are enlisted like the use of good spirited individuals to appeal to the opposing groups; proper funding and training among others. In conclusion, it is pertinent to note that these are obvious challenges but can be mitigated by applying the suggested ways

forward to re-position curriculum implementation process in secondary education system of Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development.

DISCUSSION

The study is based on re-positioning curriculum implementation process in Ebonyi State secondary education system to achieve education for sustainable development. Table 1 answered research question I based on key areas to be re-positioned in curriculum

implementations process. Thirteen key areas were identified and eight of them are already being worked on actively, while five is still pending. These steps taken show that Ebonyi State government is bent on overhauling secondary education system for sustainable development. These findings are in line with the view of Federal Republic of Nigeria [6] who stated that no nation can develop without an effective educational system. Again, the findings agree with the yearning of the state government that it is bent on rescuing the education sector [7].

Table 2 answered research question 2 that was based on procedures adopted in the key areas for the re-positioning. Ten procedural steps were identified of which five of them are in full progress in their implementation like: task force monitoring of school activities; formation of committees and meeting with stakeholders among others. The others as can be seen in Table 2 are yet to take off fully. These developments are in line with the yearnings of the Federal Government [8] in its policy statement that “education should empower its recipients with the appropriate skills, knowledge and values to adapt and contribute effectively in national development.” Again, the findings agreed with the stand point of Green Barge, Reporters [8] that progressive educational performance should be anchored on proper teacher-learner relationships, proper timing of events and activity management. The noble steps taken so far as can be seen in Table 2 will lead to proper development of the education sector and the state of Ebonyi in general. The steps enlisted according to Green Barge Reporters [8] will lead to the development of a new era in the state.

Research question 3 answered in Table 3 tried to ascertain the achievements so far made in the re-positioning strides in curriculum implementation in Ebonyi State. Eight achievements were enlisted in areas like: proper organization of the education sector; sensitization of the populace and high school enrolment; improvement in the punctuality and regularity of both teachers and students; improvement in discipline level and drastic reduction in the incidence of examination malpractice. These achievements were pointed out by the Ebonyi State Ministry of Education task force report (2016). The committee echoed that students are now punctual and regular to school and that there is drastic reduction of examination malpractice. These findings buttress the expectations of various state government regimes since the creation of Ebonyi State to remove the snag attached to the state as “Educationally disadvantaged”. This led the administration of the former

State Governor- Chief Martin Elechi to establish 27 pilot boarding schools; 3 technical colleges; giving of WAEC and NECO rebate fees of 50% to students in the state and strengthening of the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education for more result oriented outings.

Finally research question 4 depicted in Table 4 presents the obvious challenges in the re-positioning strides and the way forward. They were six challenges pin-pointed like: dearth of funds for mobilization of groups, uncooperative attitudes and betrayals by some stakeholders; politicization of government projects; lack of performing skills of school administrators and lack of good welfare packages for teachers to boost their morale. The way forward was also presented in Table 4. The Federal Government of Nigeria [9] made it clear that to successfully implement any curriculum involve infrastructural provisions and enhancement of the capacities of the administrators and teachers [10, 11]. Also, Howbeit, the Federal Government in its 4 year development plan for the education sector [12] captured some of the enlisted problems in Table 4 and have decided to develop proposal for funding and the sourcing and upgrading of physical infrastructure in schools; courtesy- TET Fund projects and sponsorship. In conclusion, it is obvious that Ebonyi State government is working hard to re-position its educational sector to achieve education for sustainable development.

Implications of the Study: The present study based on re-positioning curriculum implementation process in secondary education system of Ebonyi State to enhance education for sustainable development has obvious implications thus; that:

- Ebonyi State government has mapped out key areas to enhance education for sustainable development in the state.
- Ebonyi State government has put in place strategies to achieve sustainable development in the education sector.
- There are genuine achievements that have been recorded in the drive for education to be sustainable in the state and
- There are challenges faced in the re-positioning strides in the secondary education sector, but there are ways forward to mitigate them.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined the re-positioning process in curriculum implementation of secondary education system

of Ebonyi State to achieve education for sustainable development. The findings of the study show that Ebonyi State government has made concerted efforts to identify areas to re-position in the secondary education system and procedures for the re-positioning. Again, the study findings portray that the re-positioning is paying off as there are improvements now in the education system of the state. Finally, the study highlighted obvious challenges in the re-positioning process and the way forward to enhance education for sustainable development in Ebonyi State.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study and the implications drawn, the following recommendations were made:

- Ebonyi State government should re-strategize on the best way to diversify the funding system of education to enhance it.
- The State Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board in Ebonyi State should map out strategies for selecting experts and stakeholders to make far-reaching decisions and proper monitoring of the education system of the state.
- There is the need to re-train all educational administrators and teachers on global education procedures to enhance the achievement of education for sustainable development.
- The present government of Ebonyi State should devise ways of carrying along other political parties in the state to avoid sabotaging of genuine efforts in the educational system.
- The state government should map out plans for inter-state exchange programmes to sharpen the intellectual wits of staff and students in the education system to enhance better performance.

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