Focusing Quality Education in Ondo State Through Education Quality Assurance Agency

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Abstract

Ondo state was created in 1976 and the State was known among the frontiers of education in Nigeria, but it has been unable to occupy such position consistently as students witness incessant failure in both internal and external examinations, even promotion examinations. The state government decided to set up Education Quality Assurance Agency that would oversee the educational supervision in the state so that the lost glory could be brought back. This Agency replaces the old Inspectorate Division in the Ministry of Education. The agency is to ensure quality education in the schools including the Technical ones. This is in conformity with the global trend of the contemporary educational practices which aims at building the individuals to meet the demand of the changing world. To achieve this, all vices of educational practices should be drastically reduced or eliminated by the constant supervision of school activities in the state. This paper attempts to examine the establishment, the expectations, the achievement and challenges since inauguration.

Key word: Education, human development, quality and evaluation.

Introduction

The role of education to human development is highly immeasurable. According to Oyekan (2006), education has been recognized as a process of imparting some knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. This could take place in varying schools with the purpose of ensuring total development of the children. The relevance of education in the changing world makes some nations to regard it as a dynamic instrument of change and stability.

Education is the tool for the integration of the individual into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological progress (Adesina, 1985). Akinpelu (1981), sees education as an enabling agency by which Africa could restore their self confidence and make those who doubted the humanity of Africans to begin to reverse their views and learn to respect them. Also, education is a process through which an individual becomes integrated into the society to become promoter of his societal culture, contributor to the development of his society and becomes an adult who will be able to stand on his own. (Fafunwa, 1974).

In the light of the above, human development cannot be procured without education. It means that the essence of mankind is to learn from birth to grave. Learning is automatic experience that makes man to live a quality life. That is, the more man learns, the better he supposes to become. This is in line with the reasoning of Aristotle when he postulates that philosophers, being the most educated in his days, should be made to
govern the state. He believed that they must have acquired enough quality education and adequate knowledge to administer their nations.

Hence, the society, Ondo State not excluded, needs quality education so that people would be able to live quality lives. During the inauguration of Education Quality Assurance Agency in Ondo State, Mimiko (2010), believes that education is pivotal to human development and social economic transformation of the society. He further opines that qualitative education is meant to open and expand windows of opportunities for the advancement of the frontier of knowledge, skills, character building and entrepreneurship that would enable individuals and the state to excel in a world driven by information, communication, science and technology.

**Why Ondo State Quality Education Assurance Agency?**
The operational capacity of the Inspectorate Service Department of the Ministry of Education was at the lowest ebb, absolutely weak, ineffective and unproductive due to long period of neglect. Consequently, the Inspectorate outfit could no longer maintain the National Minimum Standard of Education in schools. The result is a large scale abysmal performance of students at both internal and external examinations that portray glaringly non-achievement of quality assurance in teaching and students’ learning outcome in schools. (Mimiko, 2010). The governor further stresses that in the determination to rescue the system from a total collapse and reposition same for better service delivery, the present administration established the Ondo State Quality Education Assurance Agency known as Quality Education to refocus the education sector for qualitative and sustainable service delivery.

**Vision of Quality Education**
The vision includes the attainment of quality standards in education through the mechanisms of effective teaching, learning, research, systematic monitoring and evaluation for intellectual advancement, self-reliance of the individuals and sustainable socio-economic development of the state.

**Mission of Quality Education**
To develop a viable supervisory system that is professionally operated by experienced, dedicated and effective staff that will guarantee sustainable quality service, standards and outputs in institutions below the tertiary level in Ondo State (ODSG, 2010).

**Preparing for the Work**
The state government prepared the agency for the task ahead when the agency was established in June, 2009. These tasks include

(a) Recruitment of staff to office and field officers (145 evaluators and 132 support staff)

(b) Procurement of 22 Hilux vans, motorcycles and motorboats.

(c) Developing the Quality Education Officers through Capacity Building Training.

(d) Commissioning Quality Education Headquarters at Alagbaka, Akure.

(e) Constructing Eighteen (18) field offices

(f) Provision of Manual and Handbook for Optimal Service Delivery for Quality Education

The Organization Structure of Quality Education are;

(a) Primary Education Department

(b) Secondary Education Department

(c) Science, Technical and Vocational Education Department
The functions of the Agency are to make:

(a) Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the curricular and co-curricular activities, especially teaching and learning.

(b) Collection, analysis and interpretation of data collected for monitoring and evaluation activities to make objective decisions for improved education service delivery.

(c) Implementation of necessary remedial action to improve teachers’ pedagogical practices and students’ learning outcomes.

(d) Feedback to all stakeholders affected by the education programmes geared towards the achievement of stated curricular objectives.

(e) Monitor learning achievements in educational institutions below the tertiary level.

(f) Training of evaluators in the modern trends of quality assurance and school improvement.

(g) Development and review of instrument that will reflect trends in the modern thinking in Education Quality Assurance, through training and retraining programmes. (ODSG, 2010).

Work Ethics and Code of Conduct for the Agency

As part of the quality assurance process, all evaluators must uphold the highest professional standards so that those in schools are treated fairly and gain the maximum benefit from the external evaluation. This code of conduct underpins the external evaluation process and secures its integrity. External evaluators must carry out their work without fear or favour and must not expect preferential treatment. (Akinroye, 2010). Ojo and Akinnroye (2010) further state the code of conduct of Ondo State Quality Education Evaluators as follows:

- They should not ask or accept any form of gratification in the course of their assignment;
- They should be punctual and time conscious;
- They should evaluate objectives;
- They should have no connection with the school which would undermine the objectivity and honest report of the agency;
- They should carry out work with integrity, and treating those evaluated or met with courtesy and sensitivity;
- They should to minimize stress among those evaluated
- They should maintain purposeful and productive dialogue among those evaluated and the general public;
- They should respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work;
- They should have a good knowledge of relevant education and quality standards;
- They should be a good team player, co-operate to ensure quality standards;
- They should be appropriately dressed;
- They should be keen observer and good listeners;
- They should be tolerant, patient and resourceful at all times; and
- They should be impartial in their judgments.
So, establishing quality education is a paradigm shift. You need a change when the former system is not working well. Nothing will change until you do something. The law of component system means that every aspect of the component is necessary to work together to actualize the aims of the system. The agency aims at working with all the stakeholders in education consistently like the learners, teachers, parents, community, non-governmental organization philanthropists, individuals, U.N.O, UNICEF, government and so on, in order to achieve the goals set for the Agency by the State government.

Type of Evaluation Adopted

In evaluation of schools, there are three types which are self internal-evaluation, external evaluation and whole-school evaluation. They are briefly discussed below.

Self internal-Evaluation is a continuous process by those within the school using quality assurance evaluation schedule to judge the quality of what they are doing themselves. The process is complemented from time to time with external evaluation by the school authority or Heads of Department.

External evaluation is a continuous process by those within the school making use of quality assurance evaluation schedule to judge the quality of what they are doing themselves. The process is complemented from time to time.

Whole-school evaluation is the process of judging quality across a school, and it involves the school self or internal evaluation and regular external evaluation. The self or internal evaluators and external evaluators do come together to access the quality of educational service delivery of the internal evaluators who are staff of school or other educational stakeholders. (F.M.E. 2010).

Performance Indicators for Quality Assurance of Education in Ondo State

The Quality Education Officers make continuous monitoring of school activities in order to ensure that proper things are done in our schools. Quality in education is determined by many factors. A school that is doing well is said to be giving quality education to its learners. The following factors are considered by the evaluators during the visitations (Inspections) these are academic performance, school facilities support to learners, effective leadership, learning environment, Teaching and learning and curriculum implementation. (Ojumu, 2010).

Good Academic Performance: At least 70% is adjudged as success base line in external examinations. The five (5) core subjects including Mathematics and English Language must be at the credit level. The transition rate from post basic to tertiary education level must be high. Schools are also measured by their performances in JETS and other areas apart from cognitive aspect.

School Facilities: The state or adequacy of school facilities are reckoned with during school evaluation. It is noteworthy that learners like to be in school where buildings are well built, neat, well painted and spaciously comfortable for students to stay rather than shabbily looking and dilapidated one. A friendly learning environment has positive impact on learners. Facilities like classrooms, special rooms, library, laboratories, sporting facilities, ICT facilities, toilet, hostels and others to be well maintained.

Leadership role to students: Prefectship and captainship are roles given to students/learners to occupy so that leadership qualities can be discharged by them. In most times the occupants of these posts lead and represent their schools in different fora. A school that gives this opportunity to learners and such learners perform well is
scored high. It is not out of place that those set of learners are in the forefront of leadership in the near future.

**Effective Leadership:** A visionless leader will find it almost impossible to have a good team that will help him or her to build up the standard of learning in the school. The style will actually affect the productivity. If the head teacher is really autocratic, there will be a minimal achievement as teachers will not be motivated to work. A good school administrator will delegate duties while he supervises them. So, when he/she is not on duty, the work still goes on. He has good relationship with Parents-Teacher Association (PTA), School Based Management Committee (S.B.M.C.) and the Community.

**Learners’ Support:** A school that gives priority to learners' support is scored high by the evaluators. Learners look forward to the teachers for counseling, directing, parenting, monitoring, guiding and motivating. Through the experience of the teachers, learners could be led well. A good school will provide functional guidance and counseling unit where learners are aware of school rules and regulations. Such school will not experience discrimination in religion, gender or disability.

**Teaching and Learning:** The quality of the teacher elicits quality teaching and learning from the teacher to the learners. Understanding of the subject matter only takes place where the teacher is qualified and competent. The adequacy of teachers fixed or allocated for subjects and the way and manner they display their pedagogical skills matters. Using approved curriculum, writing scheme of work, writing adequate lesson notes, recording their work promptly, giving students assignment and marking them, testing and placing values on the test makes a school for a good grading.

**Curriculum:** The content of the load of work being centered by the school is good to assess the school. The evaluators do check whether the teacher is teaching according to what the curriculum dictates as being transferred to the plan/scheme of work and weekly recording as well as the lesson note and students’ note as the period of the subject dictates.

**Overall Performance:** Performance is measured in the transition rate from one level to another, through period tests to terminal/sectional examination and the overall results in the external examination, the evaluators also see how the school has prepared the learners for the future. Quality Education makes learners ready for life’s challenges. (F.M.E., 2010).

**The Prospect of Ondo State Quality Education so Far**

The following are some of the prospects of the agency in Ondo State:

- Systematic and continuous monitoring of schools has made the staff to sit-up.
- There has been regular and improved attendance of learners and staff at school. Absence and truancy of learners from school have been greatly brought low. There has been an improved punctuality.
- There is now improved teaching and learning as learners academic work has greatly improved in lesson coverage.
- Grading the school through whole school evaluation process has brought a participatory effort of all educational stakeholders.
- Community is now involved in the decision pertaining to the school through school Based Management Committee (S.B.M.C.)
- Improved record keeping and accountability is now in vogue. Evaluators check records like lesson note, attendance registers, class attendance registers, time-book, records of work, log book, admission registers and so on.
- There is well response to the Agency’s Observation on dilapidated buildings as old buildings are renovated and rebuilt while Mega Schools are also newly built.
• School environment is now continually kept clean as no school wants to be accused of untidy environment. All school plans are checked regularly by the evaluators.

The Challenges of the Agency
Since the Agency was just conceived by Mimiko’s Administration, it has some challenges which need urgent solutions. They are:

(a) The Agency is incapacitated by non-legal framework which makes its operation not smooth enough to deal with some internal and external issues. An enabling law is needed to be enacted by the house of assembly on the Agency.
(b) There are no regular seminars and workshops to prepare the Agency for contemporary issues on education.
(c) Activities of the agency are still limited to the public schools (Primary and Secondary Schools) living all the private schools to their fate.
(d) The Agency is not involved in the WAEC/NECO recognition or supervision of examinations.
(e) Some teachers still see evaluators as enemies as they are adamant to change. Even, some head teachers have left supervision to the agency.
(f) There are shortage of staff and equipment for the Agency which will equal expected activities.
(g) Rural areas are not regularly monitored due to shortage of staff and vehicles and due to difficult terrain.
(h) The Agency is not yet adequately funded.
(i) Vacancies of teaching staff which are not yet filled give evaluation a huge problem during visitation.
(j) The activities of the agency are not yet given publication either in the print or electronic media.

Conclusion and Recommendation
Knowing full well that to maintain quality standard in our school, there must be a place for effective quality assurance from time to time. Therefore, government and other educational stakeholders must make sure that education is well funded, teachers need to be properly catered for, enabling laws guiding the agency need to be promulgated so that any erring teacher will be punished and reward system be in place for the hardworking ones for encouragement, the agency should be well funded. Doing these, quality will be brought back to our educational sector in Ondo state.

References