PARTICIPATORY CHALLENGES FACED THE FORMULATION PROCESS OF TANZANIA'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY (2014)

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Abstract: This research article examines the participatory challenges faced the formulation process of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014). It draws from original empirical study conducted in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma regions of Tanzania. The methodologies that were employed are qualitative. The study revealed that, the participatory approach that was employed in the policy formulation process was mainly based on "representation" and faced a number of challenges which can be schematized into two broad categories. One, the challenges associated with designing the policy formulation process; and two, the challenges associated with the manner and modalities applied in involving stakeholders in the policy formulation process. The challenges in designing the policy formulation process were: unequal power relationships among the stakeholders who were engaged in the policy formulation process; lack of adequate financial capacity; geographical barriers in collecting stakeholders' views; subjective nature of sampling process; subjective political values in the process; coordination problems; and the inadequate human resources. On the other hand, challenges associated with the manner and modalities of stakeholders' involvement were: time constraints; ineffective stakeholders' invitation approaches; the differences in perception, between the government stakeholders and non-government education stakeholders, on the efficacy and importance of stakeholders' involvement in policy formulation process; and lack of awareness among many stakeholders, on the term "policy, its functions and formulation process". Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the challenges faced the participatory policy formulation process, range from poor policy design, to non-representation sample of stakeholders. Thus, it was recommended that, there should be sufficient budget allocation to the entire process of policy formulation, and a need to put in place strategies to broaden and deepen the intensity of stakeholders' representation in the future generation of education policy formulation processes.

Keywords: Education policy formulation, participatory challenges, Tanzania Education and Training Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For decades, the concept of participation in setting development priorities has received global attention. It has been a part of philosophical discussions and world-views since the time of Plato (C.427- C.347B.C). Debates on the concept of participation gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s with the introduction of new research approach called Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and in 1980s with the introduction of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) programs. Later on, debates about participation were omnipresent in a variety of societal fields and continue to capture the imaginations and hopes of politicians, policy makers and practitioners (Carpentier, 2011, p. 165).

Historically, the need to involve different stakeholders in public policy formulation was a result of different factors. For example, Miller & Rein (1975, p. 5) hold the view that the failure of democracy and failure of bureaucracy were the two main factors that pushed the inclusion of majority in public policy formulation in America and England.

In South Africa, cases of stakeholders' involvement in formulating public policies are linked to the history of community work, the anti-apartheid movement (1976), and more recently the introduction of "White Paper on Reconstruction and Development" which sought to establish structured consultation processes at all levels of government to ensure participation in policy-making and planning" (Masango, 2001, p. 83).

In Botswana, it has been argued that, "participatory decision making did not come with the advent of independence but rather had always been part of the culture of the people" (Merafhe, 2003, as cited by Lekorwe, and Obasi, 2014, p. 4).

The history of participatory public policy formulation in Tanzania can be traced as far back as during the independence period in 1961, when the government sought to adopt participatory economic planning processes, with a view to attaining a bottom-up planning system. Such concepts as "UHURU NA KAZI", which means independence and work, were used to mobilize people to actively participate in the country's socio economic development process. "It was during that period that power was vested into people to make decisions on their development endeavor" (PMO-RALG[1], 2007a).

Other cases in Tanzania, which are linked to the initiation of participatory policy formulation, are the Arusha Declaration of 1967, and the 1992-2002 Local Government Reforms which advocated for participatory planning processes and decentralization or power devolution to lower levels respectively. Since then, and with the proliferation of pro-participatory approach, coupled with non-governmental organizations' (NGO's) lobby and advocacy, participatory decision making has become a common practice in public policy formulation in Tanzania.

Despite the emphasis on a wide set of stakeholders participation and the government's advocacy on its importance, yet the formulation processes of education policies in Tanzania, including the current Education and Training Policy (2014) faced a number of challenges, which minimised the extent of stakeholder's involvement in the process cum the quality of policy options and effectiveness in terms of implementation-process.

In Tanzania, many of the studies such as that of Sumra, S and Rajan R. (2006); Semail, L and Mehta K. (2012); Elizabeth, N (2011); HakiElimu (2015; 2017); and UNESCO – IIEP (2011), just to mention in few, are concentrated on the nature of education policies in terms of their contents and challenges in implementation process; education conditions and performance of the students, and not on how policies are formulated, policy formulation challenges, and the manner and the extent in which stakeholders are involved in the entire process. That being a case, this paper set out to examine participatory challenges faced the formulation process of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014). Findings will contribute and add value to the existing body of knowledge on education policy formulation, re-emphasize the importance of participatory policy formulation, with a view to create a sense of majority ownership; which promotes effective policy implementation. Furthermore, the findings are expected inform education policy actors in government and in non-government sectors on how to improve existing participatory modalities in formulating the forthcoming education public policies.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used exploratory and descriptive qualitative research designs. These study designs were informed by social constructionism's philosophical underpinnings which conceive reality as a result of social construction (Berger & Luckmann 1967, p.13) and therefore, the research designs were helpful in understanding the social realities produced challenges faced the formulation process of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014).

The target population for the study constituted the education stakeholders at different administrative levels of government, such as central, regional and district education officers; headmasters; normal class room teachers; academia; and stakeholders outside the public education system, such as national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), religious organizations and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Among the criteria that were used to screen potential candidates who would participate effectively in the study were: adequate awareness of the 2014 Tanzania's Education and Training Policy; holders of education based occupations in government and non-government administrative education agencies and education provision institutions.

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[1] Prime Minister's Office – Regional and Local Government (PMO-RALG). (2007a). Historical perspective on participatory planning in Tanzania.

The purposeful and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit key informants who could articulate their views on the challenges faced the formulation processes of education policies. The determination of sample size was guided by the grounded theory of qualitative inquiry which suggests that, a sample size of 20 to 30 individuals is adequate for developing a well saturated theory (Creswell 2007, p. 126-8). Therefore, we opted to use the sample size of 20 individuals. Subsequently, in-depth face to face interviews were conducted, which involved research participants from government and non-government institutions. Collected data were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis methods.

3. STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 The Development of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014): An over view from stakeholders' perspectives

The development of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (ETP, 2014) was an outcome of the expiry and hence revocation of the Education and Training Policy (1995), Vocational Education and Training Policy (1996), National Higher Education Policy (1999), and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy for Basic Education (2007). These education policies were seen to be outdated and they were unable to respond to the emerging issues in the education sector in a dynamic world. Indeed, stakeholders were of the view that a good policy should have a reasonable time frame, which should not exceed ten years since its inception. To the extent that these policies had been in operation for more than ten years, their effectiveness in addressing and responding to new challenges was put into question. This then informed the need to review and repeal the policies.

There is no an appropriate record on the exact date on when the formulation of the ETP (2014) started. However, basing on the information from the government officials, it is estimated that the study which was commissioned by the then Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) in 2005 to review the ETP (1995), marked the beginning of the process. "The 2005 situational analysis of the ETP (1995) implementation discovered that, 59 policy statements out of 149 were not implemented. Among those, 25 policy statements were for improving the primary and secondary education, 18 statements were for vocational education, and the rest 16 were for improving the higher learning education" (ETP, 2014, p. 8). These policy gaps were also identified as the challenges for the realization of Tanzania's Development Vision 2025.

According to the interviewed stakeholders, generally, it is revealed that, the formulation of the ETP (2014) was triggered by both internal/local and external factors and challenges. The internal challenges, according to the review of ETP (1995) were the following: The "inadequate teaching infrastructures and learning facilities; shortage of teaching staff, specifically in science subjects; low teaching motivation among the teachers due to low incentives and unconducive teaching environment; failure to identify special needs students and their challenging learning environments; lack of the means and strategies to identify and develop the gifted and talented students; low level of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education and vocational training; the problem of incompetence among students and teachers regarding the medium of instruction in teaching and learning" (ETP, 2014, p. 3-4)

Other internal challenges were: "the unfavourable nature of education system that was created by the previous policies which was based on academic competencies to select few students with good performance and who will study up to the university level; the problem of the learning structure 2years +7years +4years +2years +3years +, which takes 18 years to produce human resources, contrary to other neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana which took short learning period; and challenges in the provision of quality education due to the failure of curriculums to respond to the wide demands caused by social, economic, and science and technological changes, hence graduates are unable to compete in the labour market" (ETP, 2014, p. 4).

Besides the above, stakeholders had the views that, the ETP (1995) created the kind of education system which was non-multi-channelled, in the sense that it was not flexible to offer students with the opportunities to choose their paths basing on their interests and talents, and there forth to shift from one education and training institution to another institution. Another challenge was associated with leadership, legal, and administrative procedures in the implementation of the ETP (1995), which lacked clarity on demarcation in the exercise of power and authority among government officials during the policy execution.

The external factors that informed the government's decision to have the new policy were the forces of globalization, such as the advancement of science and technology, capital investment, privatization of public enterprises, and the transnational movement of labour. All these factors led to the questioning of competencies of the labour produced by the ETP (1995). Also, stakeholders had the views that the policy did not address both regional and international affairs, taking the fact that the issue of cooperation, among countries, is essential in addressing a country's development challenges. In this regard, the ETP (2014) has incorporated the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997), the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All (2000), UNESCO's Perth Declaration on Science and Technology Education (2007), and agreements of East African Community (EAC).

The traditional policy cycle approach was employed in formulating the policy. The then Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) formed a task force which was commissioned the task to review the ETP (1995) and other policies. The task force was highly technical as it was composed of government officials, academicians, and other education stakeholders from the civil society organizations. Since education is a union matter, the review covered both in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar. Structured questionnaires, face to face interview, telephone interviews and mail out/mail back survey methods were employed in data collection. The taskforce undertook study tours in other countries such as South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland, just to mention in few, with a view to learn and draw lessons from their education policies and education systems. Therefore, the collected viewpoints and opinions by the task force, and their recommendations formed the basis for the development of Education and Training Policy (2014).The vision of the policy is "to have Tanzanians who are well educated, knowledgeable, skilled, competent, and with positive attitudes in contributing to the development of the nation. Whereas the mission is to uplift the quality of education and vocational training and to put in place systems and strategies of increasing the great number of Tanzanians who are educated and are interested to acquire more knowledge in order to contribute efforts in realizing the development objectives of the nation.

3.2 Participatory challenges faced the formulation process of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014)

The challenges range from policy design to stakeholders' involvement in the policy construction. These challenges were highlighted by both government and non-government education stakeholders who were involved in the ETP (2014) formulation process and who were key informants to this study. Some of these challenges can be cited as among the reasons, for stakeholders' dissatisfaction with the process. The ensuing section provides a detailed discussion of the major challenges faced during the policy formulation process.

3.2.1 Challenges associated with designing the policy formulation process

Unequal power relationships among the stakeholders who were engaged in the ETP (2014) formulation process are one of the challenges. The unequal power relationships among the policy actors affected the policy design process, specifically, on the way in which stakeholders' analysis was conducted. It seems the nature of stakeholders' analysis and survey coverage were not well designed. They were biased to some extent because it is only the powerful and the most influential stakeholders who got the opportunity to participate in the policy process. These were further constrained by financial resources. One of the top government education officials, who was a member of team of ETP (2014) formulation process, expressed that;

"we would like to reach in all parts of the country to collect views from all stakeholders, but it was not possible because of lack of enough funds. We also wanted to circulate the policy draft in all parts of the country, but we were not able to do so because of financial incapacity". [Planning office, Tanzania Institute of Education, 8/2017]

With regard to the challenges based on designing the policy process and stakeholders' involvement, one of the interviewees expressed the concern on the manner in which group of normal class room teachers were represented in the policy process, given the fact that this is one of the key groups of education stakeholders composed of large number of individuals. According to the interviewee, who is from one of the Dar es Salaam municipalities, lamented as follows;

"it seems that there was no an effective sampling design for including normal class room teachers in the policy formulation process, that is why there was no adequate representation of this group during the construction of this education policy". [Tanzania, Temeke District Education Office, 8/2017]

Moreover, it is possible that, challenges related to stakeholders' analysis and sampling design were due to geographical and demographic factors of the country, as claimed by one of the interviewees;

"Although the policy formulation process was participatory in nature, its level of participation was not exhaustive because the education policy is too broad in terms of contents, and nearly every individual in the country is basically a stakeholder. Moreover, given the fact that Tanzania is geographically huge, therefore, it was a challenge to construct a policy process that would reach each part of the country and collect views of every group of stakeholders" [Education Services Section, Christian Social Services Commission, Tanzania, 8/2017]

Another challenge is that of politics in policy making. Indeed, several research interviewees did cite this as a challenge. In this regard, it was mentioned by one of the academics that;

"it is possible that politicians used the previous education policy (ETP, 1995) as a means of their survival and fulfilment of their political interests. That is why in most cases they were not eager to initiate a process of formulating the new policy; as a result the formulation process of ETP (2014) took long time to complete".

[School of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, The Mwalimu Nyerere Campus, Tanzania, 8/2017]

Also, it was revealed that, individuals who were engaged as members of a team of policy making were from different backgrounds in terms of expertise, political orientation and levels of education. Therefore, coordinating such diversified team was a challenging task.

The challenge of non-availability of human resources, coupled with the financial constraints, did also affect the process of policy formulation negatively. This was admitted by one of the interviewees;

"There was a very serious shortage of human resources in the government to the extent that it was necessary to find others in the colleges and universities to assist the process of identifying key education stakeholders who were to participate in the policy formulation process". [School of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, The Mwalimu Nyerere Campus, Tanzania, 8/2017]

One of the interviewees, from one of the prominent education advocacy Civil Society Organizations (CBOs) in Dar es Salaam, informed the study on the contrasting thinking between the government stakeholders and the non-government education stakeholders was one of the challenges. The contrasting thinking/attitude between the two categories of stakeholders was considered to be a challenge because it appeared to affect to some extent, the entire process of stakeholders' involvement in the construction of the policy. According to him;

"There has been thinking or a tendency from the government, that to involve stakeholders in a policy making is a matter of procedure they need to comply with. Therefore, it is possible that they sought to involve stakeholders not because they really wanted their views, but rather they wanted to fulfil the required policy making procedures. That is why some views of stakeholders were not taken into consideration despite being invited in the policy process. On the side of non-government stakeholders, their perception is that the policy process is owned by the government. In other words, it is a government-based process. Or, the thinking that other stakeholder' views will be represented by their representatives, and therefore, it is not necessary for them to participate in the process". [Research Innovation and Policy Analysis Unit, HakiElimu, Tanzania, 8/2017]

Therefore, according to the informant, it is possible that, this kind of thinking resulted in low levels of participation in the policy formulation process.

3.2.2 Challenges associated with stakeholders' involvement in the policy formulation process

The study was informed on the challenge of time constraint in terms of sending out invitations and limited time for reviewing the draft policy document. Although the informants acknowledged being involved in the policy process, some of them challenged the approach that the government officials used to invite them. One of the interviewees, from one of the faith-based and private owners of education institutions, confirmed that;

"The government officials used the traditional/classical approach which is based on chain of command and order (and which is used in the government systems) to involve stakeholders in the policy formulation. This kind of approach was not effective when applied to the non-government stakeholders because this approach demands that when a subordinate is given an order, it has to be implemented immediately. Therefore, given the nature of the non-government stakeholders, with a variety of groups and networks of stakeholders, it was not possible for the government officials to collect views

from these stakeholders within the required time frame, and other stakeholders could not even submit their views to those officials". [Education Services Section, Christian Social Services Commission, Tanzania, 8/2017]

It was revealed by several research interviewees, that this approach was also characterized by the provision of late notifications to the stakeholders to attend policy process meetings or to review the policy draft. Therefore, it was not possible for all invited stakeholders to attend the meetings. However, even those who were invited to review the policy draft and provide comments, were not able to do so, effectively, for the same reasons of late notifications and tight time schedules. One of the key informants, in the focused group discussions, and who participated as an opinion provider in the policy process said that;

"in that exercise, we were given very limited time to review the document and to provide our comments. Also, it was my expectation that they would give us a particular section of the policy which is relevant to our specialization for us to review and provide comments, but that was not the case". [Quality Assurance Office- Secondary Schools, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training, Tanzania, 8/2017]

The issue of lack of enough time was seen, not only a challenge to those who were invited to participate in the policy process, but also to those who were engaged in the process of crafting the policy document. We were informed that;

"even the policy making task force seemed to lack enough time to share issues on the education conditions in the country, with stakeholders they had invited". [Buretta Nemez, 8/2017]

The other challenge was lack of consensus among stakeholders. Initially, there was no common understanding, among them, on either the key policy terminologies to be used, or on the adopted policy formulation process. It was claimed that;

"Many stakeholders who were involved in the policy process lacked awareness on the term policy, its functions and how it should be developed. Moreover, some of them were even unable to distinguish between a policy and an implementation strategy. At times, they presented implementation problems/challenges instead of policy based problems. Hence, it was difficult to synthesizing their views and translating them into policy statements". [Policy and Planning Division, Tanzania's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 8/2017]

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper examined participatory challenges faced the formulation process of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (2014). It was revealed that, the process which produced the policy was participatory in nature, and basically employed "representation approach cum methodology. However, it faced a number of challenges, ranged from designing, to implementation of participatory policy formulation-process. Therefore, based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations for improving the adoption of participatory approach in education policy formulation.

(i) The government should provide adequate budgets before embarking on any policy-formulation activity. It is believed that, adequate budgets are key in achieving better results and outcomes for a number of reasons. One, the number of stakeholders to be involved in the process would be scaled up. Two, would facilitate production and dissemination of more policy drafts for circulation to stakeholders. Three, would enable the task force to carrying representative dialogues, while broadening the geographic coverage of the country.

(ii) There is need to put in place a mechanism to balance power relations among stakeholders during the policy formulation process. This is necessary as a way of reducing the dominance of elites in the process.

(iii) Politicians should not dominate the process by bringing in their values and interests. By doing so, the policy process would be informed by opinion rather than being the evidence-based.

(iv) The bottom up rather the top down approach of stakeholders' participation should be employed. Development of this approach will allow stakeholders (specifically the non-government, who are the majority) to be given first priority in voicing issues on the education conditions, systems and problems.

(v) There should be enough timeframe, both for the policy making task force and the key stakeholders during the policy formulation process.

(vi) The government and non-government institutions should educate the public on public policy related issues and key concepts. With such education, many stakeholders will be able to provide constructive inputs into the policy making process.

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