

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter is concerned with assessing and summarizing the study on the planning of Bophuthatswana educational reforms. An attempt has been made to determine the extent to which the recommended changes, innovations and reforms to the educational system were successfully implemented.

The discontinuation of the planning unit within the Ministry of Education on the recommendation of the Commission effectively resulted in the absence of a change-agent, a key factor in the planning and implementation for any successful reform exercise.

Recommendations will be made on conditions necessary to ensure success in planning educational reform for the future.

5.2 AIM OF RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to investigate the nature and extent of planning which preceded the reforms to the Bophuthatswana educational system; to determine the model for planned educational change which can be used to explain the success and failures of the reforms were based and to identify problems encountered in the implementation process arising from lack of thorough planning and preparation.

5.3 METHOD OF RESEARCH

A literature study was carried out at the libraries of the Universities of Potchefstroom, Bophuthatswana, Stellenbosch, Botswana, the Human Sciences Research Council library and the Bophuthatswana National Library. Education Journal and annual reports were acquired from the Department of Education in

Bophuthatswana.

5.4 STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 outlined the relationship between change, innovation and reform. Various categories and types of educational change were given. Certain basic assumptions about change and factors that influence successful change were discussed. This chapter also described some constraints on planning educational change and models of planned educational change.

The aim of describing the developments in the Bophuthatswana education system during the period 1978-1988, was attained in Chapter 3. An effort was made to indicate the changes and innovations which were all intended to reform the educational system and the achievements and problems of such developments.

Chapter 4 described the new concept and role of education for Popagano as the point of departure for the intended reform through which the Batswana culture would not only be preserved but would be nurtured; through which the beliefs, their life-and- world view and their noble aspirations would be crystallized.

The chapter also explains some of the success achieved in reforming certain areas of the educational system as well as failures resulting from lack of proper planning, the absence of a change agent and national and regional working groups. By using the R, D and D model as a centre-periphery approach, the primary education upgrading programme is described to illustrate the successful implementation of planned educational reform.

5.5 AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR PLANNED EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND REFORM

Bushnell and Rappaport (1971 : 8) have identified a systematic strategy for change (see par 2.7.6) as the suitable approach for

planning and implementing change in education. It forces the decision-makers to tackle the process logically and systematically. It allows for variables operating within the system to be examined so that these can be manipulated to ensure successful implementation of the change process. This strategy was successfully used to reform primary education in Bophuthatswana (see par 4.4.2-4.4.6).

Step 1: Diagnosis of the problem

There must be a consensus by all those involved in education at the different levels that the existing system is malfunctioning. The concrete needs, interests and aspirations of the users of education must be considered. The society must be aware of the problems within the existing educational system and understand the proposed innovations to solve them (Mushi, 1988 : 364). The clarity with which the specific problem is defined will enable the planner to give the quantitative estimates of its magnitude, the cost involved, the time-span and the resources required to bring about the desired difference.

Step 2: Formulation of objectives

Objectives are more specific and tangible statements of what must be achieved. They must be phrased in behavioural terms so that they can be easily understood and those responsible for achieving them will know exactly what needs to be done, how and to what level of proficiency (Birley, 1972 : 50).

Step 3: Identification of constraints and needed resources

Constraints are forces in the form of laws, established traditions or habits which militate against and steps to change the existing situation. Chapter 2 par 2.8 gave a detailed description of constraints which ranged from personality traits by those responsible for implementing and assimilating the change, to lack of clear goals and objectives as well as

political and administrative constraints. Public opinion on the stated objectives and plans need to be assessed in order to elicit undivided support for the reform process from the user. Resources include available personnel, trained manpower, facilities, printed materials and essential information (Bienayme, 1989 : 251).

Step 4: Selection of potential solutions

The change-agent which may be the planning unit in the Ministry of Education, or a national co-ordinating committee charged with effecting the intended change and reform makes a preliminary search for existing sources of information and solutions. By locating current studies or projects of the same nature, the planner will make use of information gained from practical experience to decide on the best possible line of action.

Step 5: Evaluation of alternative solutions

On the basis of established criteria for comparing various alternatives, the change-agent select the best alternative or solution. According to Bishop (1986 : 28) the evaluation criteria to select a solution from an array of several alternatives should be based on relevance; compatibility with the existing practices, values and policies of the client system; adaptability and whether the solution answers to the perceived needs and aspirations of the users.

Step 6: Implementation of the selected alternative

The challenges of initiating and implementing reform entails motivating and mobilising the local communities or client system not only to accept the need for change but to identify themselves with the objectives of the reform process.

Building a climate of change based on a high level of co-operation and commitment requires strong leadership to can relate

the reform process to the desires and expectations of the local communities.

Step 7: Evaluating and providing feedback

Evaluation makes it possible to determine whether or to what extent progress is being made towards the realization of the identified objectives. It further allows for the provision of feedback which may necessitate the reinforcement, modification or correction of certain steps to ensure successful goal-realization.

5.6 CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE AND REFORM

Whatever model is used to effect change, Hord (1987 : 41) believes that there is need to promote greater organizational adaptability to the change process first to maximise the success of implementation. Individuals are the functional units within the education system who make change to happen. How they interact with other people on an interpersonal level; with different subgroups at the subsystem level and with major groups at the level of the organization as a whole is crucial for the successful implementation and institutionalization of change.

Havelock and Huberman (in Bishop, 1986 : 30) have identified the following factors as major determinants of the success of educational reforms:

5.6.1 Infrastructure

The reform process requires the active participation of trained and skilled consultants, especially during the initiation and implementation stages. Such consultants will be involved in data collection and feedback; to minimize and eliminate areas of conflict, to monitor progress and evaluate the progress and success.

A system with a strong infrastructure is better able to identify needs correctly, to analyze the problem to be addressed, to identify elaborate and appropriate solutions which are feasible and materially possible and to implement these solutions. A weak infrastructure results in the absence of procedures to design and implement an innovation. This results in lack of communication, co-ordination and continuity, delays, confusion, wastage of resources and failure of the reform process.

5.6.2 Authority

Successful reform calls for a strong leadership and a genuine readiness on the part of the organization as whole to undertake change. A political commitment and support expressed through legislature to adopt the planned activities for change is vital. The strong leadership should not only reside in the political and educational hierarchies but must be characteristic of the network of individual users at all levels (Kedutat, 1984 : 529).

5.6.3 Consensus

All those involved in the management of education at the different levels must acknowledge openly and publicly that the existing system is malfunctioning and in need of reform. Open and effective communication among groups is crucial for any collaborative efforts and agreement on the educational goals to be achieved. Compatibility between the envisaged reforms and the existing practices gives the user security and makes the innovation more meaningful and less risky. The planner must make the problem explicit to those who will be affected (Craig, 1988 : 6).

5.6.4 Resources

The availability of funds, materials, equipment, facilities, premises, personnel, trained manpower is important for successful reforms. Clear educational reform policies and priorities must

be developed and communicated to all who will be affected by the reform process. Public opinion on the stated policies, objectives and plans needs to be assessed and support for their implementation has to be elicited as it will influence the progress and success of the reform process.

Using the above basic ingredients of a good infrastructure, strong and stable leadership, popular support and adequate resources one can forecast the success or failure of a reform process.

5.7 FIELD FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following fields of research arising from this study are recommended:

- An evaluation to determine the extent to which the Primary Education Upgrading Project influenced the learning ability of children in the primary school level.
- An investigation into the determining factors based on the Primary Education Upgrading Project approach that can improve the relevance and quality of secondary education.
- Instituting Universal Primary Education : possibilities and limitations.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter gives a summary of the study which was intended to evaluate the implementation of planned educational reforms to the Bophuthatswana Education system.

Finally an implementation strategy for planned educational change and reform has been recommended.