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The Operational Efficiency of the Administrative Organization of Tanzania Education System

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Abstract

The operational efficiency of the administrative organization of Tanzania education system is constrained by top down-planning, poor reporting arrangements, and excessive workload for senior ministry officials. Some areas like Special Education are underplayed. Reporting arrangements make Regional Education Officers (REOs) powerless, because they report to Regional Executive Directors. (REO's) also have inadequate powers over the District Education Officers (DEO) because of the nature of the regional and structural organization. It is recommended, among other things, that to work with macro plans would promote planning from below rather than from above. R.E.O's should be given more powers to control educational resources in their regions, and they should be linked to the DEO in order to maintain clear reporting lines.

1. Introduction

The administrative structure of the education system serves to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Formal administrative structures are therefore set up to direct performance of work in the education system. According to Knezerich (1965), Campbell *et. al.* (1983), and Hall (1977) formal organizational structure, with levels of responsibility, clear job description and well understood reporting system is a powerful tool of effective administration. However, administrative structures do not necessarily facilitate achievement of

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goals in a system which is characterized by fundamental shortcomings.

The public outcry about the falling standards of education in Tanzania has promoted concern amongst researchers and educationists like Omari et. al. (1983), and Omari and Mosha (1987), Ishumi (1988) Clarke and Wight (1987). Despite several attempts to improve the administrative structure to facilitate easy delivery of services, the structure has hitherto remained a great barrier to the effectiveness of the education system in Tanzania. Several government efforts to this effect have had implications on the administrative structure.

Decentralization of primary education aimed at increasing the proportion of the school-going age pupils receiving primary education, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of primary schools education. The reorganization of the Inspectorate in 1978 was also aimed at making the directorate more efficient and effective. The 1982 Presidential Commission on Education which reviewed the education system in Tanzania was also aimed at redressing the situation. However, according to Mwampeta (1978), these efforts have remained fruitless.

This paper examines the effectiveness of the administrative structure of the education system in Tanzania, and how it has affected the smooth operation of the education system. It discusses the administrative structure of the education system at two levels: at the central government level, and at the regional level. Section two discusses the administrative structure and the operational efficiency of the central administrative organization. Section three describes the regional level administrative organization under various sections of a system. A popular regional administration would therefore be characterised by decentralised administrative arrangements which extend to districts and grassroots levels. These arrangements may also affect the role and functions of key officials at the ministerial levels. The administrative structure of the Ministry of Education has limitations which makes it dysfunctional and unable to sustain accountability and responsibility. It is within this perspective that the administrative organisation of the Tanzanian education system is analysed and discussed.

2. The Central Government Administrative Structure

2.1 The Administrative Organization

Over years the administrative organization for the education system in Tanzania has been changing from simple to being more complex, and this is in line with its expansion. Up to 1974 the administrative structure of the Ministry of

Education and Culture (MoEC) was the flat type that caused less supervision due to the wide scope of the span of control, and an independent existence of some departments. The ministry was thus mainly concerned with the administrative and routine matters rather than the advancement of professional matters. This factor seem to have contributed significantly to the lowering of the quality of education in Tanzania. The McKinsey report of 1972 introduced a new administrative structure in Tanzania education system. The post of Commissioner for Education was introduced, and the role of the Commissioner included coordinating academic departments and the department of finance. Later in 1979 the Inspectorate was included under the Commissioner's office.

Under the Tanzanian government structure, ministries are headed by ministers who are political functionaries appointed by the president. The civil servants in the ministry are headed by a principal secretary who oversees the day-to-day operations of the ministry. The Ministry of Education and Culture operates under six directorates, namely: Teacher Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Adult Education, Technical and Vocational Education, and the Directorate of Planning. Each directorate is headed by a director. The directorates are further subdivided into subsections or units headed by officers with generalized and specialized responsibilities. Heads of these subsections or units are responsible to the principal secretary through their respective directors.

The Commissioner heads the Department of Education and is responsible for the general management and administration of all government schools, with the following main functions:

- (a) to provide professional leadership, supervision, implementation and advice on educational policy and all academic matters.
- (b) to coordinate the Ministry and parastatal organizations which deal with educational matters.
- (c) to supervise educational evaluation and planning, and directs supervision and administration of radio education programmes.

The Department of Manpower Development and Administration, UNESCO National Commission, and the audit section, are also under him. It is obvious that the Commissioner shoulders a lot of administrative responsibilities.

The organization of the ministry's administrative structure into departments, sections and units facilitates division of labour, and establishes clear lines of authority within which office incumbents work, thus minimizing role conflicts.

Delegation of authority is also important because it gives subordinate staff the opportunity to exercise control and feel responsible and accountable thus improving work performance.

Robbins (1980) suggests that delegation of authority includes assigning authority to subordinates for the performance and fulfilment of certain duties, and the acceptance on the part of subordinates of both responsibility and accountability for the satisfactory performance of these functions. There is minimal delegation of authority in the Ministry, and this observations concurs with those of Temu (1980) who found out that heads of secondary schools have got to consult the Ministry headquarters even for decisions on very routine matters.

Pffifner (1960), Anderson (1968), and McCabe (1975) emphasize the need for delegating responsibility to different people and different sections in a system. They suggest that educational administration may be sub-divided into central, regional and institutional levels with functions which differ accordingly, but remain closely interrelated and directed by overall objectives. The functions for central administration include formulating policies, setting national objectives, norms and standards, preparation of global plans, drafting legislation, and overall control and supervision.

The functions of regional administration include preparation of global plans, elaboration of regional plans, programmes and projects in accordance with global plans. Others are coordination of regional educational resources and implementation of the plan, channelling of vertical and horizontal communication between the centre, educational establishments in the region and the community generally. More specifically, the role of central government is to:

- (a) ensure availability for teachers, managers at regional and district level by recruiting training and deploying them according to requirement.
- (b) provide local authorities with adequate financing for teachers' salaries and other benefits.
- (c) provide basic services to primary schools.
- (d) prepare and distribute curricular and learning materials for schools, and
- (e) advise on specific aspects of national policies.

Institutional or school administration should be concerned with the

organization and control of the teaching function within the institution, centre or community development as related to educational matters, and day-to-day institutional administration. But the administrative structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture faces problems related to planning, inspection of schools, heavy workload, and underestimation of the role of some units in the Ministry.

2.2 The Operational Efficiency

Apart from the Department of Educational Planning, there is no detail planning undertaken in the other departments or sections of the Ministry that are under the chief department of education. The sectoral plan section of the planning department directs all sectoral planning and controls tasks, relying heavily on inputs from the education departments. But sectoral planning is almost non-existent.

It is unrealistic therefore to assume that the department of planning could execute its functions effectively without an efficient system of data gathering, processing, storing and retrieval. The planning that is done centrally by the Department of Planning cannot be final because it is usually broad and rather general. Ideally the data collected at the headquarters should be used also at regional and district levels. However, formal planning does not exist at either levels, a factor which hinders effective planning. Thus the lack of formal planning at lower levels causes wastage of time and other resources during the execution of various educational plans.

The directorate of school inspection is subdivided into secondary school inspection, primary school inspection, and teachers' college inspection. The Chief Inspector is answerable to the Commissioner who scrutinises all school inspection reports so as to initiate the necessary action. This arrangement implies that there is a smooth flow of activities. But in reality it is not so. Hyden (1979), has described a persistent character of public servants whereby subordinates tend to pass on to their superior the information that they believe is favourable to them. In this connection, although the Commissioner may receive a lot of impressive inspection reports, these reports may not necessarily reflect the real situation in schools.

It is also unlikely therefore that the Commissioner will pass on to the Principal Secretary unpleasant reports about the quality of teaching and learning in the institutions that are under his charge. No wonder therefore that Dar es Salaam region which was one of the regions praised for eradicating illiteracy in 1975, had by 1991 become the leading region in the rate of illiteracy. It is

highly likely that information given was based on faulty statistics. The Commissioner is also charged with providing professional leadership and advice on the implementation of academic matters by the various departments. As such Commissioner of Education has the opportunity of influencing what should be reported so as not to tarnish his reputation. According to Swai (1982) this was one of the hindrances in implementing recommendations of school inspectors.

The roles of principals and heads of schools should include inspection, because these are the people who are at the grassroots, and are better placed for meaningful supervision and monitoring. The major educational management task areas which are priority concern for educational managers at institutional level are staffing, management of physical resources, management of school/community relationship and management of information systems.

The section that deals with education for handicapped children in the Ministry is located in the Directorate of Primary Education. There is no such unit in other departments. This makes it appear as if special education matters only at primary education level, which is not the case. The University of Dar es Salaam has been admitting blind students for a long time now, which challenges the assumption that education for children with special needs should be given attention at primary school level only.

It was revealed from the scrutiny of the administrative structure that key officials at the Ministry, including the Commissioner, were unduly overworked. About eight directorates with various sections have to report to the Commissioner. This clearly gave the Commissioner a great deal of work. This factor has inevitably caused inaction in a number of areas like non-payment of teachers salaries on time, delays in the delivery of teaching and learning materials to schools, and poor coordination of functions among the various directorates in the Ministry. In addition, the broadcasting unit and the parastatals which are under the Ministry also report to the Commissioner. This excessive workload eventually reduces the effectiveness of the key personnel and some departments in the Ministry.

According to the Presidential Commission on Education (1984), the Ministry envisages to change the administrative structure so that the advisory board would be changed into a Council of Education where members may not only advise, but also criticize if necessary. The Unified Teacher Service (UTS) board has been accorded more powers by turning it into a commission that will be known as Tanzania Teachers' Service Commission, under a commissioner, with several directorates and departments.

Other measures include instituting the planning process in every department. A mechanism for carrying out planning in every department will be established and the department of educational planning will be made to deal with coordination only. Reporting arrangement will also have to change to give less workload to the Commissioner. Some of the directorates will report to the Principal Secretary who is the accounting officer of the Ministry. All parastatals under the Commissioner will also have to report to the Principal Secretary.

3. The Regional Level Administrative Organization

3.1 Regional Organization

Decentralization of the government in 1972 affected all sectors in Tanzania including education. The education system which had been operating on a centralized administration was decentralized, and authority was concentrated on the grassroots levels. Figure 1 shows the regional administrative structure of education in Tanzania.

Under decentralization, Regional Education Officer (REO) became functional managers to the Regional Development Director (RDD), and the Regional Development Director became the head of the government team at regional level charged with coordinating development plans, and implementing regional development programmes.

According to McKinsey (1972), and Nyerere (1972), decentralization was aimed at strengthening the central government by spreading the powers of planning and the control system throughout the government, and making the development committees a more effective forum for discussion and decision-making. This was done by ensuring that membership to all relevant committees at all levels was dominated by representatives of the people. This strategy was expected to improve and hasten development in the rural areas. Decentralization of primary education also aimed at involving people in decision on issues that concerned the education of their children in their villages. McCabe (1975) underscore the fact that:

... rational decision making is possible only on the basis of objective related information collected coordinated and analysed as between institutions and regions and the centre. ... information and communication systems must ensure the free flow of information

upwards and horizontally as well as downwards from the centre not only to facilitate rational decision-making but also for improved human relations.

3.2 The Administrative Organization under Decentralization

All the regional programmes at the national level are coordinated through the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister is the spokesman of the regions to the central government ministries and responsible for providing clear policy directions and guidelines for planning at regional and district levels. According to Maeda (1978), the Prime Minister's office helps the regions to prepare development plans when necessary, and review the work progress in the regions to ensure high standards of performance. Thus communication between the functional managers at the district level and regional level is usually done through the District Executive Director (DED) and the Regional Development Director (RDD) respectively. Figure 2 shows the regional administrative organization after decentralization.

Under this administrative organization the heads of primary and adult education at regional level are amongst the function managers. They are assisted by three education officers, responsible for Unified Teaching Service (UTS) matters, academics, and statistics. The education officer responsible for adult education has subordinates who deal with more responsibilities as the key figure in the educational management machinery. This suggests clearly that at regional and district levels the officers are not overworked. They are supplied with desk officers who assist them in certain specific matters of administration.

According to Hyden (1976) the roles of the Regional Education Officer (REO) include advising the RDD on all aspects relating to education such as recommending major areas for development, advising on the technical feasibility of district education plans, and reporting the progress of education programme implementation. He/she also provides the DED with technical advices and assistance in identifying opportunities for development, preparing district functional plans, directing implementation, evaluating performances, and taking corrective actions where necessary. He has to ensure also that the development ministries provide districts with functional resources as agreed in the annual plans, and directing regional staff to provide the support services required for district development programmes.

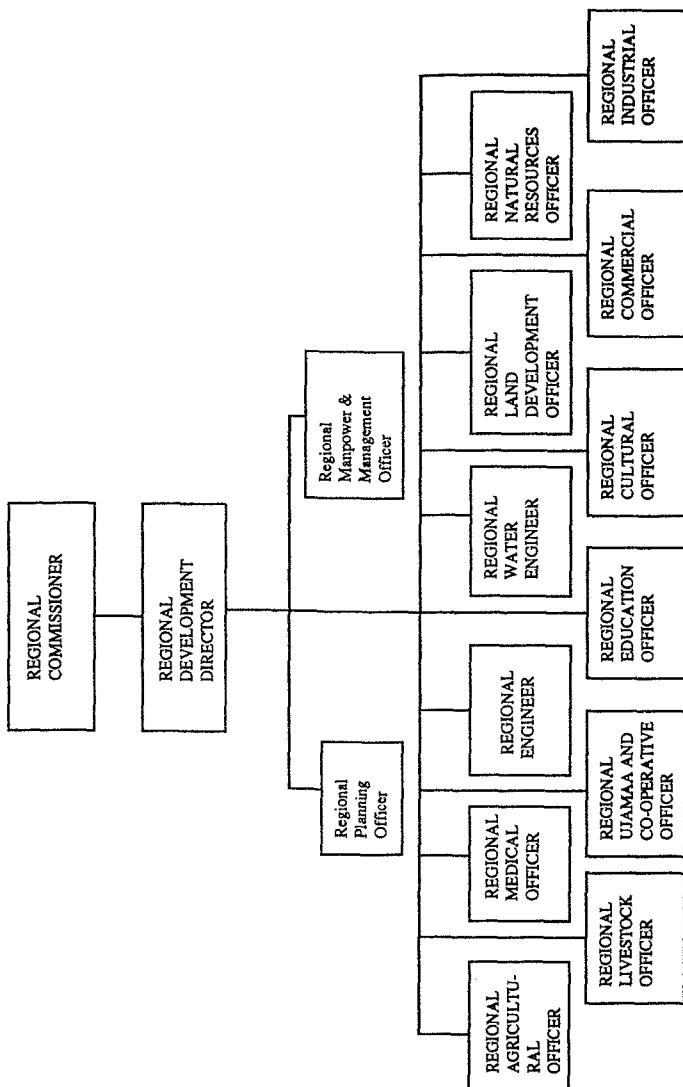


FIGURE I: THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION TANZANIA

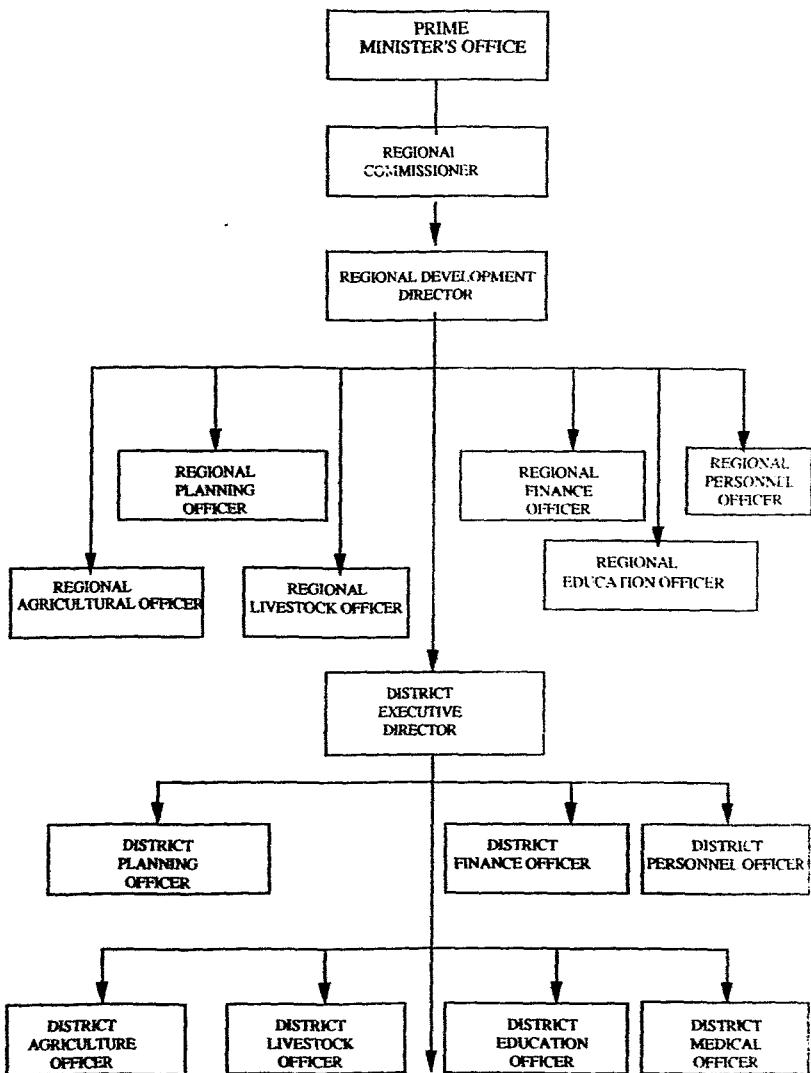


FIGURE 2: THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION AFTER DECENTRALIZATION

Taking into consideration the nature of the roles and functions of the REO, it is highly unlikely that the educational administrative structure would really facilitate the execution of these tasks. The REO requires enough staff to assist in carrying out his/her duties. However, although all the functions of the REO relate to the districts, the REO is not effectively connected to the districts in his region. Therefore the administrative structure does not facilitate effective functioning of the REO.

3.3 Workload and Authority Relations

Education officers are normally overworked. For example, according to the Ministry of Education (1987), on the average the number of primary schools in a region was 512. This means that the primary school directorate receives and analyses inspection reports from all these schools in the regions, and is also responsible for organising and conducting staff development programmes including seminars and workshop for primary school teachers, as well as the procurement and distribution of textbooks. The primary education section also deals with the general education statistics. Certainly this appears to be a lot of work for a single section to deal with, and may cause hasty and ineffective handling of crucial matters.

According to the structure of education in the regions, the education officer responsible for audio-visual materials reports to the education officer in charge of adult education. In this case it appears as though audio-visual materials exist for adult education purposes only. But in reality, primary school pupils need audio-visual materials perhaps more than adult learners. Adult learners can substitute audio-visual materials by recalling from experience. With such structural arrangement there is a danger of the adult education section appropriating all teaching material available for education in the region, with primary schools getting none. Furthermore, under this regional administrative structure the REO has only three subordinates of whom only one has a further subordinate. This suggests that some important tasks in the provision of primary education are either left out due to the broad nature of the categories of task that are to be performed, namely planning and evaluation.

3.4 Limitations of the Administrative Structure

Some of the major limitations of the administrative structure relate to financial control, staff development and training, decision-making, education quality control, and power relations between REO and the DEOs.

3.4.1 Financial Control

The REO does not control the funds allocated for education at regional or district levels. The funds are controlled by the RDD. The managerial role of both REOs and DEOs are circumscribed by the roles and interactions with regional and DEDs, and their relevant development committees. The delivery capacity, financial viability, and perhaps even educational attainments within districts—especially at primary school level—depend upon the interrelationship at these levels.

The capacity to mobilize resources at regional and district level appear strained. In this way the REO cannot ensure that all the funds allocated for education are solely used for educational purposes. The RDD may allocate only a small portion of the budget to education, and divert the rest of money to other sectors, depending on the weight given to education in the region as compared to other sectors such as agriculture, health, or industries. The REO cannot also discipline officers who misuses educational funds, since he/she does not control those funds. This contributes significantly in causing inefficiency in the performance of the duties of the REO's.

3.4.2 Staff Development and Training

Staff who were previously employed by functional ministries and later transferred to regions during decentralization, still depend on their ministries for training and promotion. According to Hyden (1976) this system has given rise to a lot of complaints, especially among teachers who, due to their great numbers have less chances for promotion and training. Mwampeta (1978) revealed that in-service education and support services in the form of seminars to teachers greatly declined in the post decentralization period.

The REO cannot effect training or promotion in the region, because he/she does not control funds for this purpose. The REO can only confirm recommendations from the districts, and pass them on to the RDD to give final decision. Lack of adequate autonomy is therefore a factor that contributes significantly to the inability of the REO and DEO to induce or improve their institutions in an innovative manner.

3.4.3 Decision-making

Under decentralisation, regional and district administrative structures were

organised to ensure more active participation in decision-making. However, since most powers are with the DDD and the RDD, they are therefore heads of the government at their respective levels. The RDD is financially accountable to the parliament. Final decisions are therefore made at these two levels because they are the ones that matter. The REO is by-passed by the DEO during decision making. Maeda (1976) reported that there were conflicts between the Ministry and district officials in Arumeru district in an incidence regarding the changing of a primary school into a college. This conflict is a clear indication of the potential hazards that could arise from marginalising the REO's.

3.4.4 Quality Control

Supervisory services do not involve education officers at the regional level. Inspectors of schools are organised in zones and districts, and report to the Chief Inspector of Schools under a separate inspectorate structure in the Ministry. The REO is only given copies of their inspection reports for information. According to Mwampeta (1978) supervisory services also declined during decentralization period. Mfikirwa (1976) revealed that in 1970, 33 schools were inspected, while 16 schools were inspected in 1971, 9 schools were inspected in 1974, and only 6 schools in 1975. This shows clearly that the number of schools inspected before and after decentralization declined; and REOs could do little to improve the situation.

3.4.5 Power and Influence

According to the administrative structure, the REO has no direct powers over DEO's or teachers within his/her region. Although some of the roles of the REO are to provide the DED with technical advice and to ensure that the development ministries provide districts with resources, he cannot do much because his efforts can be blocked by the DED who can ignore the advice, or divert resources to other sectors.

The REO has no power to transfer district education directors or teachers even when it appears necessary, such as in the case of conflicts, especially between the DEO's and other district staff. The district council is usually too powerful for the REO to interfere with. There were plans to empower the REO's to make them less accountable to the RDD. This was however later seen as capable of leading into interference with the decentralization system since

other functional managers might have demanded the same. The problem has therefore been left unresolved.

4. Summary and Conclusion

As we have seen from our discussion, the main problems in the administrative organization of the education system in Tanzania include the lack of detailed and adequate planning mechanism, poor reporting arrangements leading to excessive workload for the commissioner for education, and the under-estimation of the importance of some sections. The roles of institutional heads need to be redefined and strengthened in order to ensure effective monitoring and supervision. Reporting arrangements at the regional level are also unclear. The REO has limited powers to enhance effectiveness in his work. The administrative structure does not give the REO the power over the DEO or teachers, and this renders him ineffective. Unbalanced workload, poor reporting arrangement and simplicity of the administrative structure compounds the problem.

To make the administrative structure more effective, the Department of Educational Planning should work with sub-plans from units, sections, departments, and not vice versa. This would capture the innovativeness, responsibility and accountability of the personnel in the grassroots units, section or departments. This approach will promote planning from below rather than from above.

The functions of sections such as the Special Education Unit are underestimated. The Special Education Unit should be made more inclusive to cover all levels of education, to be of more benefit to gifted and to disadvantaged learners at all level of education.

The REO should be given powers to control the funds allocated for education so that the funds may not be diverted to other uses. Funds for education are greatly needed for the purchase of materials, training, seminars, and in-service programmes. Thus there is need to exercise care and frugality in utilizing the funds.

In the existing structure, the DDD breaks the communication between the DEO and the REO's, thus rendering the REO ineffective. REO's should be linked to their DEO's in order to maintain a clear line of reporting to the REO. In the reporting circuit, roles of institutional heads should be better articulated and redefined.

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