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Factors Militating Against Effective Implementation of the 6-3-3-4 Education Policy in Nigeria: A Case Study in Policy Failure

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Abstract

This paper is on the factors militating against effective implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education policy in Nigeria, using Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study. Its objective was to find out factors that militated against the effective implementation of the policy. To achieve this objective, ten (10) schools were randomly selected in the local government area. This study adopted the survey

method and structured questionnaire were administered in eliciting information from the respondents and fifteen respondents were selected from each of the ten schools. The technique of data analysis was simple percentage. The findings revealed that lack of manpower, lack of equipment, inadequate guidance and counseling procedure, absence of legislation, etc were the bane of the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education policy. Based on the result, the study draws the conclusion that the policy itself was not bad, but failed as a result of poor implementation. On this basis, the study recommends that for the 6-3-3-4 system to succeed, there is need for gradual and systematic approach towards the implementation of the policy and also ensure that the goals and objectives set be periodically evaluated to create opportunity for innovations aimed at solving the emerging problems and so on. This will ensure a better standard of education in Nigeria.

Key word: Policy, Public Policy, Implementation, Vocation, Skills, Curriculum, Innovation, Education

Introduction

Policies are actions taken or to be taken and actions not taken or not to be taken by government or private organizations. It specifies the line of action or proposed line of action in relation to certain activity areas. (Ikelegbe, 1996, p.2). Thomas Dye sees government policies as “whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (Egonmwan, 2009, p. 1)

Government while discharging its constitutional responsibilities formulates and implements various policies in different areas of governance. These include: transportation policy, health policy, water resources policy, housing policy, agricultural policy, urban renewal policy and educational policy which is the focus of this paper.

The importance of education to man and the society at large cannot be overemphasized. Education is one of the current inalienable rights that should be accorded to all human beings. A denial of the right to education is almost a denial of the right of existence of an individual and condemning of a society to the peril of under development. Due to the importance of education to an individual and the society at large, there are lots of International Human Rights instruments that provide for education as a fundamental human right. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1981), and the Child Right Act. However, despite these instruments initiated for the provision of basic free and qualitative education to individuals, it has become a common experience that there are inequalities in access to education and achievement as well as high levels of absolute deprivation of education in most parts of Africa. In the past three decades, government funding of education has continue to decrease despite the fact that there

are new reforms on education by government of different countries across the continent. These reforms are premised on the fact that in the 21st century, countries in Africa conterminously realized the fact that they have to model their education system to meet with the challenges of globalization, occasioned by their need for industrialization and technological development thrown at the doorsteps of the countries in the continent. It was in recognition of this that the Nigerian government reformed its educational system by introducing the 6-3-3-4 educational policy in the early 1980s.

A critical examination of the type of formal education in Nigeria before and after independence shows that educational policy was inadequate and unsatisfactory to the nation's aspirations. In the opinion of Fafunwa (1982); the education was parochial, elitist and irresponsible to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society. In a bid to check this anomaly, the then federal government of Nigeria adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development.

The then federal government thereafter made efforts to formulate educational policy that best suited Nigeria's developmental needs. Hence the formulation of "6-3-3-4 system of education" According to Omolewa (1986), the history of 6-3-3-4 system of education dated back to 8th September 1969 during the International Literacy Day when the Federal government inaugurated a conference which formulated the ideas leading to the 6-3-3-4 policy. The broad aims of education under the 6-3-3-4 system as outlined in the NPE document are to hasten the political, economic and technological development of Nigeria so that the country would be a strong, self-reliant, free and democratic nation.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent argument and debates by Nigerian educationists yearning for a viable nation resulted in the curriculum conference of 1966 which culminated in the formulation of the 6-3-3-4 education policy. This is because the awareness of any country lies in the ability of education planners to improve the standard of education in the country. To this end, educational curriculum planners succeeded in introducing the 6-3-3-4 policy in order to ensure that educational programmes are taken step by step to ensure conscious learning among the students.

However, this policy made to provide a sound education system in the country is marred by problems which hinder the implementation of the system by heads of schools. Among these problems are lack of qualified manpower, lack of funds, lack of adequate guidance and counseling, problems of continuous assessment among others. There is also the problem of inadequate material resources, planning without accurate data, poor curriculum implementation etc. all these problems are encountered by school heads in

Esan North East Local Government Area in the implementation of the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 policy.

Viewed critically, it then becomes obvious that the above mentioned problems have led to the fallen standard not only in the area in question but in the whole of Nigeria. If these problems are given attention, the standard of education will certainly improve as far as education in our nation is concerned.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the implementation challenges of the 6–3–3–4 education policy as encountered by heads of schools in Esan North East Local Government Area. The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the extent lack of manpower affects the implementation of the 6–3–3–4 education policy.
2. To determine the extent poor planning without accurate data affects the implementation of the 6–3–3–4 system of education.
3. To examine the impact of absence of legislation on the 6–3–3–4 system of education on its implementation
4. To examine how lack of equipment and tools affects the implementation of the policy.
5. To determine the extent inconsistency in policies affects the implementation of the education policy

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

- (a) Does inadequate manpower affect the implementation of the 6–3–3–4 system of education
- (b) Does lack of equipment and tools affect the implementation of education policy?
- (c) Does inadequate guidance and counseling procedures affect the implementation?
- (d) Does absence of legislation affect the implementation?
- (e) Does lack of adequate funding contribute to poor implementation?

Literature Review

Education holds the basic key to socio-political and economic development. Thus, the Federal Government of Nigeria in its opening statement on the National

Policy on Education maintains that “*education in Nigeria is an instrument ‘par excellence’ for effecting national development*”. But since independence, Nigeria has had quantitative education with minimal impact on national development. Despite the previous reforms in the sector to make it more efficient, problems persisted, just as panaceas abound, but questions remained, hence the clamour for innovation in the sector. The history of Nigeria education pre-dated independence. Before independence, precisely in 1954, the colonial government reformed the existing educational system from 8-6-2-3 (that is 8 years of primary school, 6years of secondary school, 2 years of higher school certificate and 3 years of University) to 6-5-2-3 (6 years of primary school, 5years of secondary school, 2years of higher school certificate and 3 years of university). This reform merely reduced the year of schooling from nineteen (19) to sixteen (16) years. Though the curriculum remained heavily academic, hence the need for more innovation and the change for sustainable economy and development.

Historically, training in specific skills was pivotal in the development of great nations. In the United States of America for instance, the centrality of vocational/technical education in the economic growth is irrefutable. Gutek (1983) maintains that as early as 1917, a federal law (Smith- Hughes Act) was passed to provide funding for vocational / technical education in response to the increasing demand by industries for technical skills , and “throughout the twentieth century, vocational education received additional funding” (Gutek, 1983). Vocational and technical schools were federally funded because US business sector and industries persistently complained that the “*schools let students graduate who lack not only necessary general skill but also specific skills for employment*”, an observation that accurately reflect Nigeria’s predicament. The role of technical education in South Korea’s technological development is even more dramatic. Soon after independence in 1945, South Korea re-organized its school curriculum and placed emphasis on science and technical education (Majasan, 1998). The combination of aggressive educational policies, visionary leadership and disciplined labour force revolutionized South Korea and propelled her to economic greatness such that the erstwhile mendicant nation dependent on the US for food aid, turned a well-established nation and their unquestionable technological success was evident globally even in remote West Africa with “*the arrival of Daewoo cars*” (Majasan1998: 56). South Korea’s functional education system never allowed loss of talents.

The national post-independence curriculum conference held in Lagos in 1969 recommended a change in education system from 6- 5- 2- 3 to 6- 3- 3- 4 (that is, 6 years primary school, 6 years secondary split into junior and senior secondary school of equal duration, and 4 years of university education). The new system was fundamentally different from its predecessors; the highlight was the inclusion of technical/vocation subjects, conspicuously absent in the previous system which scholars variously criticized as being overtly academic unanimously decried the Western type of the

colonial curricula. The British colonial curriculum was not different (Ajayi: 1997). Essentially academic, the colonial curriculum catered for less than 5% of the population who proceed to higher education. It was unsuitable for the remaining 95% for whom secondary education was terminal; these were left without saleable skills (Aisiku, and Fafuna: 1992).

The recognition of the literally and the academic nature of the curriculum of Nigerian schools probably inspired the re-organization of the curriculum and entire school system that gave birth to the 6-3-3-4 system whose goal was to provide option for those who may not proceed to senior secondary as well as provide opportunity for self-employment for those to whom secondary education was terminal. In fact, among the objectives of secondary education was provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (FGN, 2004).

The National Policy on Education (NPE-1981) recommended the establishment of more National Technical Teachers' colleges for the production of adequate man-power supply for the country. The Federal Government implemented this recommendation by the establishment of National Colleges of Education (Technical) across the country and have common goal among which is training skilled technicians, technologist and other related skilled personnel who shall be both enterprising and self-reliant (FGN, 2004). But to what extent do these colleges of education (Technical) meet the goals to justify their continued existence? Do they graduate sufficient number of students in various vocational and technical subjects to teach same in secondary schools? Available statistics unfortunately, tend to suggest otherwise.

More distressing is the graduation rate in these institutions across subjects. Even in the courses of choice that hold promise for white-collar jobs, the percentage of graduate is abysmally low (Biodun and Awoni, 1997). Generally, graduation rate across courses is below 50% except in a few dotted instances in purely technical courses where enrollment is generally low. The statistics showed that colleges of education (Technical) are not generating enough man-power as anticipated to teach the vocational/technical subjects at secondary schools level.

Vocational/technical education neither thrived in the 6-3-3-4 system of education nor in colleges of education (Technical), nor since the incident of school drops out at secondary level is on the creative ways of generating interest in vocational and technical education must be crafted. It is rather paradoxical that the same youth who loathe vocational/technical education learn the same skill through apprenticeship and often demonstrate mastery of the skill. High enrollment in computer training centers and electronic repairs workshops, which usually lasts for few months, suggests that vocational/technical education among Nigerian youth will thrive if other

supportive structures are in place. It may be difficult for any nation to develop without vocational and technical educators.

Research Methodology

This study is focused on the survey of factors militating against the implementation of the 6–3–3–4 system of education in Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The population for this study is drawn from all the secondary schools in the Local Government Area and ten (10) schools were sampled.

From each of the selected schools, fifteen teachers (15) were used as respondents. A total of one hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed and same number was returned.

Method of Data Collection

In generating data for this study, the primary and secondary sources of data collection were utilized. The primary sources of data were obtained through the use of questionnaires which was the major instrument used in the research work, while the secondary sources of data were obtained from appropriate textbooks, journals, mimeograph, newspapers and official reports.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from respondents of this study were carefully edited. The data were analyzed in appropriate tables according to responses obtained to test the validity of the hypotheses of the study. To make the study non-complicated and easy to understand, simple percentage has been used in the system of analysis.

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among one hundred and fifty respondents representing the population of the study. Out of the one hundred and fifty questionnaires distributed, the researchers were able to gain answers from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section of the study critically examined the data collected from the field through the response of teachers from selected secondary schools in Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The questionnaire embraces responses positive or negative options. A total number of one hundred and fifty questionnaires were administered to the ten (10) selected schools. The questionnaires were distributed by the school heads/respondents and returns were made immediately hence there was no loss recorded in the process as reflected in the return rate.

Research Question One: Does lack of adequate manpower affect the implementation of the 6- 3- 3- 4 system of education?

Table 4.1: Effect of manpower on 6-3-3-4 system

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	70
No	45	30
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

From the above analysis, it is clear and evident enough to say that lack of manpower affects the implementation of the 6- 3- 3- 4 system of education. 105 Respondents agreed to that effect while only 45 disagreed.

Research Questions Two: Does lack of equipment and tools affect the implementation of the system of education?

Table 4.2: Implementation of the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	91	60
No	59	40
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In the above table, it is observed that 91 respondents i.e., 60% of the population were of the view that lack of equipment and tools led to the failure of the implementation of the 6- 3- 3- 4 system of education while 59 respondents (40% of the population) disagreed with the research question.

Research Question Four: Does lack of legislation affect the implementation?

Table 4.4: Effect of legislation on 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education implementation.

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	91	60
No	59	40
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In the above, 91 respondents agreed that lack of legislation affected the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 programme while 59 disagreed. It should be borne at the back of our minds that absence of mandatory laws supporting the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education remains a major problem for the effective implementation. One hundred and five (105) respondents agreed with this research question while 45 said they do not agree that continuous assessment has a role to play in the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

Research Questions Four:

Does lack of adequate funding contribute to poor implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education?

Table 4.5: Effects of funding on implementation of 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	80
No	30	20
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In the analysis above, 120 of the respondents agreed that lack of adequate funding was part of the problem that militated against the effective implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, while 30 disagreed.

Summary

The data treated yielded as many positive responses as well as negative ones. It should be observed that so many factors militated against the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The curriculum of the 6-3-3-4 system of education is about the best for Nigeria in terms of its perceived contribution to technological development and Industrialization. The policy if properly implemented will build into individual graduates technical capacity which will assist the society at large. The major challenge facing the achievement of this system of education in Nigeria is the failure of government to properly fund the system. Instead of adequately funding of the system, the government has so far shifted more of the responsibility of funding education viz –a – viz the funding of the system to private concerns which has more compounded the problems of implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational system.

Research question one shows on table 4.0 that 105 (70%) respondents agreed that lack of adequate manpower affects the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, while 45 (30%) disagreed. On table 4.2, it was indicated that out of 150 respondents, 91 (60%) shows that lack of equipment and tools affects the implementation of this education policy and 59 (40%) did not agree with that position. Ninety one respondents to question four indicated on table 4.4 that lack of legislation affect the implementation of the 6 -3 - 3 - 4 system of education, while 59 (40%) disagreed.

In view of the above, majority of the respondents agreed that lack of adequate manpower, equipment and tools, legislation and lack of proper funding of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education in Nigeria are the major challenges.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made;

1. If the 6-3-3-4 policy must achieve its objectives expected of it by government and people of Nigeria, some steps must be taken. Foremost, that the need for gradual and systematic approach towards the implementation should be recognized and followed in the spirit of “make haste slowly” Thus, the goals and objectives set must be periodically evaluated to give room for innovations aimed at solving the emerging and unintended consequences .
2. The Federal Government should formulate policies to address the imbalance between technical/vocational schools by coming up with a legislation that would enforce the establishment of private vocational institutions rather than universities.
3. The curriculum of vocational schools and institutions should be tailored to the need of industries so that the products of vocational training are employable.
4. The government should encourage selected firms in the country by giving the necessary support and incentives, such as tax relief and inexpensive lands for expansion, to boost the production of educational equipment and materials so that all schools are adequately equipped for the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 policy instead of going overseas to purchase such materials.
5. Finally, government through the EFCC and ICPC must show a determination to stamp out corruption from public life. The time for lip service is over. Government must show courage and boldness in dealing with political patronage, the twin brother of corruption.

Conclusion

This study focused on the factors militating against the effective implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education policy in Nigeria- a case study of Esan

North East Local Government Area of Edo State. It was discovered in the course of study that lack of manpower militates seriously against the effective implementation of the policy. Lack of equipment also contributes to the failure in the implementation, and lack of adequate funding is a stumbling block and a host of other factors.

Relevant literatures were reviewed and basic data collected and analyzed. A few recommendations have been made and we are convinced that this research work will aid policy makers to correct the anomalies discovered as problems facing the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

However, the study is exploratory and has not dealt exhaustively on subject matter as the researchers effort may be a starting point for subsequent researches.

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