EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 6-3-3-4 SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper reviews the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system with particular reference to junior and senior secondary school curriculum, workshops, equipment and tools, learning environment and conditions of service for teachers. Most of the problems identified initailly as militating against the success of the educational system are still with us. These problems are traceable to economic, political and social situation in the country. The recent call for suspension of the 6-3-3-4 system of education is because the programme has failed to meet the expectations of the people. What students are learning in the present system are essentially theoretical duc to lack of tools and equipment, workshop/laboratory buildings and motivated teachers. This paper recommends that we should overhaul the implementation system, reduce the content/scope of science and technical curriculum and emphasize the study of French language because of its importance and the global trend.

Introduction

The national policy on education was put into operation in 1982 to achieve the national educational aims and objectives which are:

1. the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
2. the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
3. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
4. the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981).

The government took various measures to implement the policy. The educational structure was changed from the former 6-5-2-3 to 6-3-3-4 structure. The latter consists of six years of primary education; three years of Junior Secondary School (JSS), three years of Senior Secondary School (SSS), and a minimum of four years of university education. The Federal Government produced syllabi for teaching new subjects, purchased and distributed pre-vocational equipment to states, trained teachers within the country and abroad as well as organized workshops and seminars to expose technical teachers to effective use of tools and equipment.

The programmes at the secondary school comprise academic and pre-vocational subjects. They also emphasize technology education for all students. Some of the advantages of having academic and pre-vocational subjects are:

1. provision of a broader foundation to the students upon which they will build a more appropriate future education and career;
2. appreciation and positive understanding of manual work and the dignity of labour; and
3. closing the gap between the educational output and the demands from the labour market (Ugoh, 1983).

These are to increase productive work and make schooling meaningful, relevant, exciting and valuable to the students.

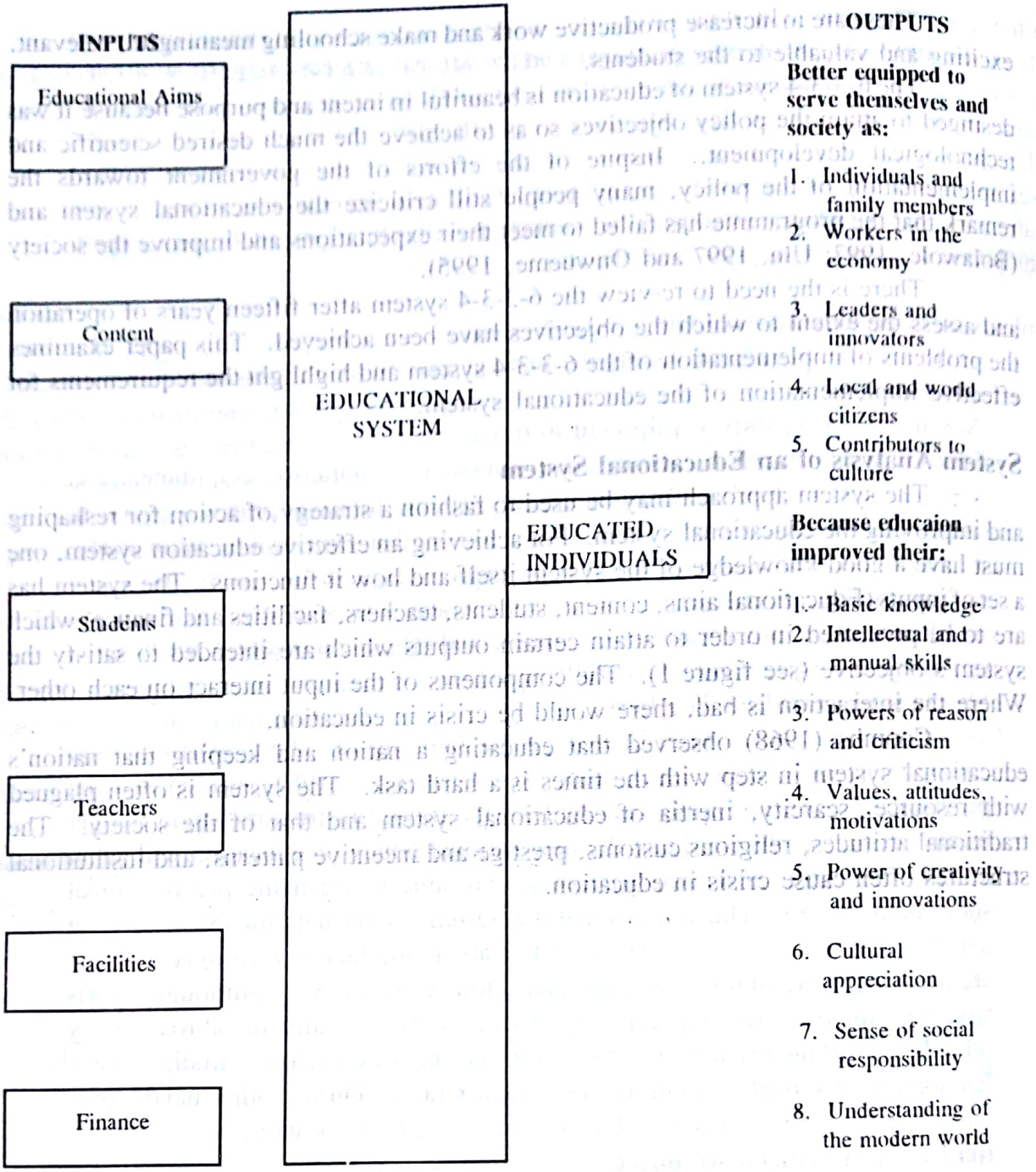
The 6-3-3-4 system of education is beautiful in intent and purpose because it was desinged to attain the policy objectives so as to achieve the much desired scientific and technological development. Inspite of the efforts of the government towards the implementation of the policy, many people still criticize the educational system and remark that the programme has failed to meet their expectations and improve the society (Bolawole, 1997; Ulu, 1997 and Onwueme, 1995).

There is the need to re-view the 6-3-3-4 system after fifteen years of operation and assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. This paper examines the problems of implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system and highlight the requirements for effective implementation of the educational system.

System Analysis of an Educational System

The system approach may be used to fashion a strategy of action for reshaping and improving the educational system. For achieving an effective education system, one must have a good knowledge of the system itself and how it functions. The system has a set of inputs (Educational aims, content, students, teachers, facilities and finance) which are to be processed in order to attain certain outputs which are intended to satisfy the system's objective (see figure 1). The components of the input interact on each other. Where the interaction is bad, there would be crisis in education.

Coombs (1968) observed that educating a nation and keeping that nation's educational system in step with the times is a hard task. The system is often plagued with resource, scarcity, inertia of educational system and that of the society. The traditional attitudes, religious customs, prestige and incentive patterns, and institutional structures often cause crisis in education.



Source: Coombs, P.H. (1963) The World Educational Crisis P. 12.

Coombs (1963) pointed out:

> When a society decides to transform its 'elitist' educational system into one that will serve the mass of people, and when it further decides to use that system as an instrument for national development, it is beset by many novel problems. One is that while many more people want more education, they do not necessarily want the kind of education that under new circumstances is most likely to serve both their own future best interest and the best interests of national development p. 7.

The current educational system's aims or priorities are different from the former grammar school system (with the 6-5-2-3 structure). The 6-3-3-4 system and its implementation require far-reaching changes in the system's academic structure, the curriculum, teaching methods, facilities and equipment and in the distribution of teachers

and the flow of students within the structure. A significant innovation in the curriculum such as the introduction of pre-vocational and vocational subjects require additional physical facilities and equipment and in the number and kind of teachers. This and other changes in the system's input have considerable implication for the quantity and quality of the educational outputs. Lack of proper interaction of the components of the system makes it difficult if not impossible to achieve the desired aims and objectives. The situation is worse where some of the inputs are absent. In such case, youth unemployment and technological underdevelopment will persist.

Problems of Implementation of the 6-3-3-4 System

There are major problems facing the implementation of the educational system for the past fifteen years.

1. **Absence of Workship, Equipment and Tools**
   There is lack of physical facilities like workshops, laboratories, equipment and tools in some schools. This makes it difficult to have practical work in workshop oriented courses. It is important to note that some schools were unable to install the equipment distributed to them. As a result, many tools and equipment have been carried away in the crates and sold off. Without the installation of the pre-vocational equipment and effictive utilization, the benefits of the 6-3-3-4 system cannot be fully realized.
2. **Shortage of Qualified Teachers**
   The public has shown keen interest in the building of school workshop and equipping them. While this is important, Onabamiro (1984) warned that the provision of workshop equipment without the trained instructors would not get us anywhere. He declared that the new national policy on education will stand or fall depending on whether or not we are able to teach the pre-vocational subjects in the JSS. This implies that the training of teachers for JSS is of great national significance. It was estimated that about 30,000 pre-vocational teachers are needed for the junior secondary education (Ugoh, 1983). Although efforts have been made to train this category of teachers both locally and abroad, many schools are without teachers of Introductory Technology, Business Studies, Home Economics, Practical Agriculture and Local Crafts. On the other hand, some schools have qualified teachers but no equipment to work with.
3. **Inadequate Financial Resources**
   The current economic recession presents a serious financial constraint. Allocated resources were usually inadequate to put the programme on a strong footing. The laboratories are usually crowded, ill-equipped with marginal teaching quipment and supplies. There is increase in student population without a corresponding increase in source of revenue or funding. Unfortunately, this may affect the quality of graduates of the programme.
4. **Problem of Teaching Nigerian Languages**
   There are not enough teachers for Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo languages. At present, some native speakers are assisting in the teaching of the various languages in the JSS so that students will be able, at least, to communicate. Nevertheless, the SSS syllabus for Nigerian languages is too high in terms of scope/content for those studying any of them as a second language.
5. **Wide Scope for Science and Technology Curricula**
   Science and technology subjects are available at the junior and senior secondary schools levels. The JSS teaching syllabus is good and the implementation is not

too difficult for their level. It exposes children to so many areas of study. On the other hand, SSS syllabi are too advanced in some areas and not suitable for the level of the students. This is particularly noticeable in sciences and technology subjects.

Recommendations for Effective Implementation of the Educational System

The national educational system seems to be in crisis. It has known a shortage of funds, teachers, facilities and teaching materials. Of course, a shortage of everything except students. The educational system will need more money which may be hard to get since education's share of national income and budget is low. The system needs adquately qualified teachers to raise the quality, efficiency and productivity of education. It needs buildings, equipment and more learning materials. Certainly, the nation cannot afford to starve the educational sector financially if the nation is to develop technologically.

In order to achieve improvements in the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system, the following recommendations will be helpful:-

1. **Central Location of Facilities for Utilization**
   Sharing of expensive school facilities and specialized personnel by two or more neighbouring institutions. This include sharing of workshops/laboratories, catering facilities, sports equipment, typing pool and computers. The use of specialized training facilities among different schools should be based on comparative cost studies. This should be adopted where possible without incurring high cost in transportation and coordination of programmes.
2. **Use Reliable Data to Guide Planning and Execution of Programme**
   Planning and projection of the educational programme should be based on reliable statistics. Lack of reliable data to work with was a major problem on our past and current educational systems.
3. **Review the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) Systems**
   The scope and content of the science and technology syllabi should be reduced. It would be beneficial to reduce the area of study and reserve such for university education. This is justifiable on the bases of poor performance and acute shortage of teaching facilities.
4. **Emphasize French Language in the Secondary School Curriculum**
   It would be more productive to consider French language as a core subject in the secondary school because of its importance and long term benefit to the students and the nation. By so doing, nearly everybody will have some idea of French language to the extent that a competent medical doctor, Engineer, Teacher, Accountant or Lawyer can have at least a working knowledge of French language in order to be able to communicate in business transactions or accept jobs in French speaking countries.

   French language is important in the international community and should be promoted. It is the world's second commonly accepted international language and is referred to as the language of diplomacy and clear thought (Osazuwa, 1990). On the economic plane, encouragement of French studies in Nigeria will give the French speaking persons from Togo, Benin, Senegal or Cote D'Ivoire more access to Nigeria's market. French language is undisputable important to Nigeria's economic and political growth at the international level.
5. **Create good Environment to make Learning Conducive**
   There is joy in wanting to study if there is a good environment. No decent

environment for people to work and learn. No decent classrooms for children and staff. There should be adequate space for laboratory, equipment and tools and long-term maintenance plan for school facilities and equipment.

6. **Improve Condition of Service for Teachers**

It is important to make schools better places for teachers to work efficiently. There is the need to give teachers better conditions of service that will encourage them to put in their best. At present, many of the teachers spend part of the official working hours to argument their living because their basic earning is not adequate. There is the need to make teaching attractive and improve rewards for teachers and working conditions in schools.

Summary and Conclusion

Implementation is a definite plan or procedure employed to achieve the aims and objectives of the policy. The implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system is important because of government's concern for qualitative education.

The system emphasizes technology education which is important for economic independence and the development of human resources in certain fields which are needed by the economy.

Where there are policies and workable strategies for implementation, economic growth will create employment for the people. Nigeria cannot afford to revert back to the grammar school system. The government should consider increasing the percentage of her expenditure for education from the total federally collected revenue. The success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate financing. Poor planning and execution of educational services can adversely affected the quality of training output.

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